





**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Title:	Housing Management Consultative Committee
Date:	4 November 2008
Time:	3.00pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall
Members:	Councillors: Caulfield (Chairman), Allen, Davey, Fryer, Mears, Pidgeon, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson), Simson and Wells
Contact:	Martin Warren Senior Democratic Services Officer 01273 291058 martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Tenant Representatives:

Chris El-Shabba, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Stewart Gover, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Ted Harman, Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel

Heather Hayes, North & East Area Housing Management Panel

Chris Kift, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Beryl Snelling, Central Area Housing Management Panel

Tina Urquhart, West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel

Joan Westmoreland, West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel

Muriel Briault, Leaseholder Action Group

Tom Whiting, Sheltered Housing Action Group

John Melson, High Rise Action Group

Colin Carden, Older People's Council

Sue Hensen, Tenant Disability Network

AGENDA

33. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) Declaration of Substitutes - Where Councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same Political Group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.
- (b) Declarations of Interest by all Members present of any personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- (c) Exclusion of Press and Public - To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

NOTE: Any item appearing in Part 2 of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.

A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.

34. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 6

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2008 (copy attached).

35. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

36. CALLOVER

37. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(The closing date for receipt of public questions is 12 noon on 28th October)

No public questions received by date of publication.

38. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

(The closing date for receipt of Councillor questions was 10.00am on 23rd October)

No written questions have been received.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

39. DEPUTATIONS

(The closing date for receipt of deputations is 12 noon on 28th October 2008)

No deputations received by date of publication.

40. PETITIONS

41. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

(The closing date for receipt of Councillor letters was 10.00am on 23rd October)

No letters have been received.

42. ESTATE SERVICES REVIEW

7 - 18

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached)

Contact Officer: Hilary Edgar

Tel: 293354

Ward Affected: All Wards

43. DELIVERY OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR COUNCIL SHELTERED HOUSING TENANTS

19 - 34

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached)

Contact Officer: Helen Clarkmead

Tel: 293250

Ward Affected: All Wards

44. HOUSING PROCUREMENT PROGRESS REPORT - PRESENTATION

Presentation by Representatives of the Asset Management Panel

Contact Officer: Nick Hibberd

Tel: 293756

Ward Affected: All Wards

45. LOCAL DELIVERY VEHICLE - PRESENTATION

Presentation by the Head of Housing Strategy & Development.

Contact Officer: Martin Reid

Tel: 29-3321

Ward Affected: All Wards

46. VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICES

35 - 66

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached)

Contact Officer: Nick Hibberd

Tel: 293756

Ward Affected: All Wards

47. HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

67 - 92

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing (copy attached)

Contact Officer: John Austin-Locke

Tel: 29-1008

Ward Affected: All Wards

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

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For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Martin Warren, (01273 291058, email martin.warren@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication - Monday, 27 October 2008

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

3.00pm 23 SEPTEMBER 2008

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Caulfield (Chairman); Allen, Davey, Mears, Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson), Simson and Wells

Tenant Representatives: Chris El-Shabba (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Stewart Gover (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Ted Harman (Brighton East Area Housing Management Panel), Heather Hayes (North & East Area Housing Management Panel), Beryl Snelling (Central Area Housing Management Panel), Tina Urquhart (West Hove & Portslade Area Housing Management Panel), Muriel Briault (Leaseholder Action Group), Tom Whiting (Sheltered Housing Action Group) and John Melson (High Rise Action Group)

PART ONE

20. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

20a Declarations of Substitutes

20.1 Councillor	For Councillor
Pidgeon	Harmer – Strange
Randall	Fryer

20b Declarations of Interest

20.2 There were none.

20c. Exclusion of Press and Public

20.3 The Committee Considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether , if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information s defined in Schedule !2A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 1001 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

20.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

21.1 Tom Whiting referred to the petition received from sheltered housing residents (Paragraph 7.1 refers), stating that this represented a 90% response rate calling on the city Council to retain the present system of Scheme Managers.

21.2 Councillor Simpson referred to Paragraph 15.7 and sought to clarify the tenure arrangements relative to the 393 properties referred to.

21.1 In response to a query from John Melson, the Assistant Director explained that information relative to the number of applicants and refusals had been collated and was available and would be included in future performance reports.

21.4 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2008 be approved and signed by the Cabinet Member.

22. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

22.1 The Chairman welcomed all present and reiterated her priorities and commitment that tenants would continue be at the heart of the service; that housing management would be a 'three-star' service and that improvements stemming from recent consultation would be on-going and evident.

22.2 **RESOLVED** - That the position be noted.

23. CALLOVER

23.1 **RESOLVED** - All items were reserved for discussion.

24. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

24.1 There were none.

25. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

25.1 There were none.

26. PETITIONS

26.1 There were none.

27. DEPUTATIONS

27.1 There were none.

28. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

28.1 There were none.

29. LOCAL DELIVERY VEHICLE

29.1 The Committee considered a report of the director of Adult Social Care and Housing relative to proposals to establish a housing Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) (for copy see minute book).

29.2 The Director explained that following the recommendation of the Housing Management Consultative Committee (22 July 2008) and approval of the Housing Cabinet Member to proceed to the proposed development and finalisation phases of Stage 2 of the review of Housing Green Paper options, the proposal to establish LDV had been further developed and refined. The purpose in proposing the LDV was set out and it was noted that the current proposal complied with the parameters which had been set in the light of the tenants overwhelming rejection of the stock transfer proposal in 2007, namely:

- No RSL involvement;
- No freehold transfer;
- No transfer of tenanted properties; and
- Maximum transfer of 499 properties within a period of 5 years.

29.3 A full discussion took place in respect of the various issues surrounding the proposed LDV. Councillors and tenant representatives flagged up many areas of concern which they had or on which they would require further clarification in the future. The Chairman confirmed that these issues would be taken on board and that full consultation would take place as the process rolled forward.

29.4 Having considered the report in detail Members voted unanimously in support of the concept of the LDV but also agreed that there were additional issues and recommendations which they wished to put before the specially convened meeting of Cabinet to take place on 24 September 2008.

29.5 An indicative vote was also taken from tenant representatives present. Nine were in attendance out of a possible 11 and their indicative vote was also one of unanimous support, albeit that they also raised issues which are also encompassed in the bullet points set out in (2) below.

29.6 **RESOLVED** - That the Housing Management Consultative Committee, consider and commend for approval of the Cabinet meeting to be held on 24 September 2008, the report regarding the establishment of the proposed Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) and the granting of leases attached as Appendix 1 to the report; and

(2) The HMCC whilst supporting a proposed LDV in principle also wish to make the following recommendations and representations to Cabinet:

- That works should meet a locally set "Brighton" standard as well as decent homes standards set by the government (this to be determined as a result of further detailed consultation with tenants and those representing them in order to identify and determine their specific needs):

- Detailed information regarding the financial implications to be provided as the scheme rolls forward (this to include a detailed analysis of both the potential advantages and disadvantages of opting for charitable status);
- Regular updates to be provided (to HMCC), relative to detailed financial and other information as part of an on – going process in advance of further reports being put before the Cabinet for approval ;
- Additional meeting(s) of the HMCC to be scheduled as necessary in order to inform and facilitate this process (as referred to above);
- Details to be provided to the Area Panels as an integral part of the consultation process , their input to be fed into the HMCC meetings; ;
- Information relative to the properties involved to continue to be reported in the same manner as the first tranche (should that information not be available in the public domain ;
- Monitoring of housing supply throughout the process - Area Panels and HMCC to be informed in advance relative to this and all other relevant details as they emerge in advance of further approvals being sought by Cabinet and Council (the timeframe for this first stage in order to commence the process and to ascertain potential funding sources was accepted); and
- Whilst accepted that employment and training opportunities would arise as part of the procurement process and should be reported as such that this consideration should nonetheless form an integral part of the aims of any “company” set up as the LDV.

30. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2007 / 2008 FINAL OUTTURN AND FORECAST OUTTURN FOR 2008 / 2009

30.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing setting out the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2007 / 08 final outturn and the forecast outturn for 2008 / 09 as at month 4 (for copy see minute book).

30.2 John Melson referred to the condition of a number of the windows of properties in Whitehawk and the need for the necessary remedial./ replacement work as a matter of priority. Tom Whiting, Tina Urquhart, Heather Hayes and Stewart Gover also cited other examples of works requiring urgent action and others which had been commenced or completed which in their view were less immediate. Stewart Gover and Tom Whiting referred to instances where new sturdier front doors had been fitted but which were either too heavy or the necessary adjustments had not been made to enable them to be used by those who had limited strength to open or close them.

30.3 The Chairman responded that she was aware of the instances cited and the conditions tenants were living with in some areas of the City. This situation had arisen as a result of the piecemeal approach to the carrying out of works in consequence of there being insufficient funds to carry out longer term works. It was recognised that tenants needed to be properly consulted with and involved in the process. It was intended that over the next year to 18 months the changes in the procurement process would enable an improved citywide plan to emerge.

30.4 Councillor Randall referred to the fact that a percentage of the rental income generated was given to central government. He considered that this was unacceptable and enquired what action was being taken to seek to remedy this. He also considered that any further improvements which could be effected in terms of vacancy management would be welcome. Whilst properties were empty pending remedial work they were unavailable for letting, this cost the Council money.

30.5 The Chairman responded explaining that the Council had joined the "Negative Housing Subsidy" campaign led by Waverley Borough Council which was campaigning to ensure that reforms of the HRA subsidy rules would mean that rental income collected by individual local authorities was paid back to them in full by central government.

30.7 Councillors Simpson and Wells expressed support for a proper planned maintenance programme based on a definitive stock condition survey. Councillor Mears concurred in that view stating that it was clearly recognised that there was a need to be able to react to emergencies but also to have a sustained long term maintenance programme in place. Tina Urquhart stated that surveyors visiting her estate preparatory to works being carried out had informed tenants that w/ef 1 September only emergency repairs would be carried out, in light of the information contained within the report she enquired whether this was correct. The Chairman confirmed that that information had been incorrect and that she and Councillor Mears, the Leader of the Council would ensure that this situation was corrected and that all Officers were aware of the current situation.

30.8 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee note that the final outturn for the HRA for 2007 / 08 was an underspending of £1.310 million compared to the budgeted position of a small surplus of £ 0.129 million. This represents a variance of 2.99% of the gross revenue budget of £43.463 million. General HRA revenue reserves have increased by £1.439 million to £5.615 million as at 31 March 2008;

(2) That the Committee note that the earmarked revenue reserves for the Estate Development Budget (EDB) are £34,000 as at 31 March 2008; and

(3) that the Committee note that the forecast breakeven position for 2008 / 09 as at Month 4 which includes an additional contribution from HRA reserves to fund additional energy costs.

31. SHELTERED HOUSING FOCUS GROUP UPDATE

31.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing updating Members on the work of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group looking at issues raised by tenants concerning Council owned sheltered housing in the City (for copy see minute book).

31.2 Councillor Randall stated that in his view there was a need for a menu of care required as not all older tenants were residents of sheltered housing schemes. Stewart Gover stated that there was a need for differing levels of provision; "supercare" schemes were to be applauded however. Councillor Pidgeon referred to the need to ensure that works were carried out quickly once identified. He stated that he had been notified of an instance where a lift had been out of operation for 5 weeks whilst awaiting a replacement part, clearly that was unacceptable.

31.3 Councillor Simpson commended the work of the focus group stating that if its findings could be used to facilitate action against an identified need that would be valuable. The Chairman confirmed that it was important to facilitate this process.

31.4 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee notes the progress of the Sheltered Housing Focus Group to date.

(2) The Committee notes the report on the outcomes of the initial scheme based consultation events report (appendix 2);

(3) The Committee notes further consultation events are to be held with sheltered housing schemes and Housing Management officers; and

(4) The Committee notes that officers will arrange visits to the sheltered housing schemes with shared facilities for the Cabinet Member for Housing.

32. CHAIRMANS' WORKING GROUPS (TENANCY AGREEMENT)

32.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing presenting the results of the tenant led Chairman's Working Group considering the development and adoption of a revised tenancy agreement for tenants living in council housing (for copy see minute book)

32.2 Chris El Shabba gave a presentation on behalf of Barry Hughes who was unable to be present. Tenant representatives indicated the need for agreements to be clear and consistent and for a sympathetic approach to be employed when dealing with succession of tenancy issues where adult children had been living in a property with their parents when they became deceased. Several incidents were cited including one which had been related recently in the "Argus". The Director responded stating that she was investigating this matter and fully accepted that the manner in which that case had been dealt with had been unacceptable, she was also seeking to ensure that measures were put into place to so that that all staff received training as appropriate to ensure that such incidents did not occur again .

32.3 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Committee note the conclusions of the working group outlined in the presentation and draft tenancy agreement attached at appendix 2; and

(2) That the Committee note the conclusions of the working group which will be taken forward as the basis for wider consultation with stakeholders and tenants on the development and adoption of a revised tenancy agreement for tenants living in council housing and forward to the housing cabinet member for approval.

The meeting concluded at 7.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 42
Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	ESTATES SERVICE REVIEW:
	Cleaning service for general needs council housing
Date of Meeting:	4 November 2008
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care and Housing
Contact Officer:	Name: Hilary Edgar
	Tel: 293354
	E-mail: Hilary.Edgar@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision:	No
Wards Affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals to make changes to the cleaning service in the communal areas of council flats (excluding sheltered accommodation), following recommendations made by the Estates Service Focus Group to the Housing Management Sub Committee on 15 January 2008.
- 1.2 The report also includes a review of the service charges that residents who live in flats pay for this service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Housing Management Consultative Committee recommend that the Housing Cabinet Member meeting:
- (1) Note the proposed changes to the cleaning service outlined in this report.
 - (2) Approve the proposed service charges for communal cleaning, as shown in Table 1 in paragraph 5.4.3 with effect from 6 April 2009.
 - (3) Approve that the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing implements the new charges, but with the power to make any minor amendments which may appear to be appropriate in particular cases.
 - (4) Note the proposal to carry out benchmarking of the cleaning service in 2009/10 so that a value for money assessment can be made of the restructured service.

3. **CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR CLEANING COMMUNAL AREAS**

- 3.1 The Estates Service was set up in 2005 to provide a citywide cleaning, community and mobile warden service. It was introduced after consultation with staff and residents and replaced an uneven service made up of residential caretakers and mobile wardens, where only some blocks in the city were regularly cleaned.
- 3.2 The cleaning arm of the Estates Service is provided by six mobile teams of cleaners. These teams are responsible for carrying out a range of cleaning tasks in the communal areas of flats, to frequencies determined by the type of block. Each team has one cleaner who is paid an allowance to be a Team Leader and is managed by an Estates Service Manager.
- 3.3 Last autumn, the Chairman of Housing established a short-term, resident led, focus group to review the Estates Service.
- 3.4 The work of the focus group was reported to Housing Management Sub Committee in January this year, together with recommendations for service improvements. Since January, officers and residents have worked together to develop these recommendations. A report outlining this work, which covers the two other arms of the Estates Service – Community and Mobile Wardens – was presented to residents at the October/November cycle of Area Panels.

4. **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CLEANING SERVICE**

4.1 **Focus Group Concern: Limited supervision within the cleaning service**

4.1.1 **How this is being addressed:** A draft structure is in place, subject to staff consultation following the outcome of this report, to change two of the existing Estates Service Manager posts, into the posts of Cleaning Managers. The Cleaning Managers will be fully responsible for managing the cleaning service and will spend at least 60-70% of their time inspecting the work of their staff, making the decisions needed to ensure cleaning schedules are met, liaising with residents' associations and other service providers eg City Clean and the local Housing Offices.

4.1.2 This change will achieve a far greater amount of 'on site' supervision and quality checking than the current arrangements, where the requirements of the Estates Service Manager post mean these officers play a wider role in the Estates Service and are often office based.

4.2 **Focus Group Concern: Insufficient time to clean blocks thoroughly**

4.2.1. **How this is being addressed:**

The focus group requested that officers investigate whether high and low rise cleaning could be separated, with fixed location staff for groups of high rises.

- 4.2.2 Over the past six to eight months, six cleaners have been taken out of the mobile teams, and set up as 'dedicated' cleaners, each responsible for a group of properties. The trial areas are listed in Appendix 1.
- 4.2.3 Because the cleaners are not covering large areas they start and end their working day in the blocks they clean, rather than at Hollingdean Depot. The time they save by not having to travel and stock up with water for the day, is turned into time available for cleaning.
- 4.2.4 This way of working has received positive feedback from residents. They advise they have:
- enjoyed building up a relationship with 'their' cleaners
 - found response times to emergencies to be quicker
 - found that the standard of cleaning in their buildings has improved
 - noticed that the cleaners have appeared less 'rushed' in their approach to work

Cleaners taking part in the trial have said they prefer working this way as it allows them to take more responsibility for their work, and to get to know the residents in the buildings they are working in.

- 4.2.5 Because of the success of the trials and the improvements it has brought to cleaning standards, it is proposed to extend this way of working across the city, with smaller mobile teams covering properties that can't easily be fitted into a 'dedicated' patch.

4.3 Focus Group Concern: Poor communication between staff and residents

4.3.1 How this is being addressed:

At a local level the trial 'dedicated' cleaners have helped to bridge this gap – they are an immediate link to the Estates Service and report back on repairs that are needed in the blocks they work in, including the removal of graffiti and bulk refuse. They have also become part of the building's community and a familiar 'face' to residents. If the role of Cleaning Manager is introduced, these post holders will also be meeting residents on a daily basis and asking their opinion about the service.

- 4.3.2 The Estates Service Monitoring Group will continue with a stronger role for residents' to play in monitoring the cleaning service. Resident feedback on cleaning will be fed into the performance reports that are presented to Area Panels and this committee, so that qualitative information is available along with the quantitative data that is already provided.

4.4 Focus Group Concern: The service produces work of a varying quality

4.4.1. How this is being addressed:

The Focus Group said they wanted cleaners to be properly trained. In June, a group of fifteen cleaners and managers started an NVQ Level 2 in Cleaning which incorporates the British Institute of Cleaning Science Proficiency Certificate. This course lasts approximately six months, and includes training in a wide range of cleaning tasks, customer service and health and safety. Assessment is based on written tests and practical exercises. Staff will participate in this course on a rolling programme, with the aim of all staff receiving this accreditation.

4.4.2 This training is being provided through the national 'train to gain' scheme, at no cost to the council. The increased supervision and quality checking on work carried out by cleaners, will also ensure work across the city is of a consistent quality.

4.5 Summary of proposed changes

4.5.1 The changes to the cleaning service, set out above, will provide:

- More time available for cleaning and sustainable improvements in the service
- A management structure that is fully responsible for the cleaning service
- Quicker response to emergencies from on site cleaners
- Cleaners who take responsibility for an area and build up good working relationships with local residents
- Improved performance monitoring

4.5.2 Following approval from the Cabinet Member for Housing to the revised service charges set out below, officers will consult with staff and residents on the details of the new service, with a view to introducing it by April 2009.

5. SERVICE CHARGES

5.1 The cleaning function of the Estates Service is funded from service charges paid by tenants and leaseholders.

5.2 Regardless of whether the existing model of service is continued, or a new one introduced, it is necessary to review the level of service charges that are passed onto residents, to take account of the actual costs of providing the service. The Estates Service focus group was advised that if changes were going to be made to the way the cleaning service was provided, charges should also be reviewed to achieve a realignment of income with expenditure. The focus group requested that officers provide residents with two pieces of information:

- what level of service would be provided after the realignment exercise, if the charges were to remain at their current level
- how much service charges would need to increase to cover the costs of providing a service that met their recommendations

5.3 Current Service charges

- 5.3.1 The current cleaning service charge calculation is based on the estimated number of hours per year taken to clean an average Low, Medium and High rise block or House of Multiple Occupation (HMO). This average is then multiplied by the number of blocks in each category to arrive at the total number of cleaning hours and cost. The annual cost is then divided by the number of tenants and leaseholders in each type of block to arrive at a cost per tenant.
- 5.3.2 Since the service was set up the costs of providing it have exceeded the income from service charges, with the shortfall in funding met from the Housing Revenue Account. The current forecast shortfall of £241,300 for 2008/09 is mainly due to increased overheads and eight additional cleaners that were taken on, when a review of the first year of the service found the original number of cleaners, twenty eight, was insufficient to regularly complete all the work required to a consistent standard
- 5.3.3 The focus group requested information on the level of cleaning service that residents would receive if service charges remain at their current levels and are limited to an increase for inflation, in 2009/10. If the budget (£1,031,600) is limited to the current level of service charge (£790,300 per annum) this would mean that the current service provided would need to be scaled back by 20%. In practice this would mean removing the eight additional cleaners from the service and cutting back on the level of service provided to each block. It would be difficult to have a service based on 'dedicated' cleaners as the cleaners would have to cover a much wider area than has been used in the trial patches, and require vehicles to travel between sites.

5.4 Proposed service provision and service charges

- 5.4.1 Having piloted the dedicated cleaner service, there is now new data available which shows approximately how much time it takes to clean high rise, low rise and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- 5.4.2 If the dedicated pilot model is spread across the city with the majority of cleaners starting and ending their day 'on site', it is possible to transform a considerable amount of unproductive travelling time into time available for cleaning which can then be allocated to blocks in line with the revised estimated timings. This means that an increase in the time available for cleaning can be provided within the existing budget (inflated for 2009/10) as the current service, by changing from a mobile to a predominately 'dedicated' service.

5.4.3 A similar methodology to the current service charge calculation has been used with the exception of the reclassification of medium rise blocks to either high rise or low rise. These blocks are listed in Appendix 2. Once the new service is up and running and data on every block is gathered, the aim is to move towards an actual charge per block. The proposed weekly charges at 2009/10 prices are set out in Table 1 below compared to the current charges also inflated to 2009/10 levels.

Table 1: Proposed Weekly Charges for 2009/10

	HMOs	Low Rise	Medium Rise		High Rise
2008/9 current charge	£0.38	£2.32	£1.90		£1.53
Current charge inflated to 2009/10 prices	£0.40	£2.42	£1.99		£1.60
2009/10 proposed charges based on new service	£0.50	£2.41	Low Rise	High Rise	£3.58
			£2.41	£3.58	
(Reduction) Increase in charges for 2009/10 from current service	£0.10	(£0.01)	£0.42	£1.59	£1.98
% Reduction / Increase in charges from 2008/09	31%	0%	27%	88%	134%

5.4.4 The increase to the service charges will be 'un-pooled' or taken out of individual tenant's rents. This means that any tenant seeing an increase in their individual cleaning charge for 2009/10 will see a decrease in their rent. The level of the decrease in their rent will be dependant on the rent restructuring calculation for 2009/10 as dictated nationally by central government. This formula is currently under review and the outcome of the consultation will be available during November. However, under the current rules, the tenant will then move in greater increases towards their target rent and eventually pay the target rent plus the service charge by 2011/12.

5.4.5 All cleaning charges for communal areas are eligible for Housing Benefit. For those on full Housing Benefit, the charge will be compensated in full. At the current time it is estimated that 71% of all groups of tenants receiving the cleaning service are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

5.5 Consideration of alternative options

5.5.1 The focus group did not consider alternative ways of providing the cleaning service - their aim was to improve the cleaning provided by the Estates Service.

- 5.5.2 It is therefore suggested that in 2009/10 a benchmarking exercise is carried out to allow the council to compare the cleaning provided by the Estates Service against that of other social housing landlords to assess the 'value for money' of the new structure. The outcome of that exercise will inform discussions with residents on communal cleaning in the next financial year.
- 5.5.3 Some benchmarking has already been carried out and the proposed service charges for communal cleaning in Brighton & Hove in 2009/10 have been found to be in line with the charges of other social housing providers in Sussex and in the South East. However, a more extensive benchmarking exercise will involve comparison not just of the final charges that are passed onto residents, but of the way cleaning services are provided and the work that is carried out.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Estates Service Focus Group met four times before reporting to the Housing Management Sub Committee in January. Since then a group of residents, made up of the focus group members, and the existing Estates Service Monitoring Group, has met regularly to oversee the work that has been taking place to develop the focus group's recommendations.
- 6.2 Staff, and their union representatives, have been invited to meetings to discuss changes to their particular service areas, and a regular newsletter has been produced for all staff in the Estates Service to keep them informed of the work that has been taking place.
- 6.3 Any changes required to individual job descriptions will go through the council's change management framework.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Financial Implications:

The proposed service charges outlined in table 1 paragraph 5.4.3. will ensure recovery of the 2009/10 budget of £1,054,000. Therefore an extra £228,100 will be generated for use by the HRA. However, the un-pooling of these increases from tenants' rents mean that the charges are phased-in for tenants and so the income is also phased-in for the HRA.

If the Government's rent restructuring formula remains the same, it is estimated that £76,000 (i.e. one third) extra income will be received in 2009/10; a further £76,000 in 2010/11 with the full amount being available in 2011/12.

Any additional income will be included within the 2009/10 and future HRA budgets.

Finance Officer : Monica Brooks

Date: 9 Oct 2008

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Under the Council's standard secure tenancy agreements tenants are obliged to pay "rent and other charges". The proposed cleaning charges constitute "other charges" and the Council can make changes to the charges providing it gives at least 4 weeks notice of the change. Failure to pay the charges may amount to non performance of an obligation of the tenancy agreement which is a ground upon which the Council can take possession proceedings.

Lawyer consulted: Deborah Jones Date 21 October 2008

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The changes proposed to the way the cleaning service is delivered will ensure greater consistency in cleaning standards in the common parts of council accommodation.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 There are no direct implications

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.5 There are no direct implications

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.6 There are no direct implications

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.7 There are no direct implications

8. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 8.1 This is contained within the body of the report in paragraphs 5.3.3 and 5.5.

9. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To advise residents and members of the proposed changes to the way the cleaning service is provided in council accommodation and changes to the charges for this service.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Trial sites for 'dedicated cleaners'.
2. Proposed reclassification of medium rise blocks

Documents in Members' Room

1. None

Background Documents

Chairman's Working Group (Estates Service) Housing Management Sub-Committee report 15 January 2008.

APPENDIX 1

Trial site based cleaners:

- Clarendon Estate – Clarendon House/Conway Court/Ellen House/Goldstone House/Livingstone House/Ellen Street (2 cleaners)
- Nettleton Court/Dudenev Lodge/Theobald House
- Essex Street/Essex Place/Oakley House/Garnet House
- Hereford Court/Wiltshire House/Malthouse Court
- Wellington Road/Morley Lodge/Parkmead/Park Crescent

APPENDIX 2

Proposed reclassification of medium rise blocks

Name of block	Proposed reclassification
Hollybank	Low rise
Johnson Bank	High rise
Napier House	High rise
Barcley House	High rise
Kingswood & Milner	High rise
Essex St (low rise flats)	Low rise
Highcroft Lodge	High rise
Park Royal	High rise
Holbrook	Low rise
Downford	Low rise
385 Kingsway	Low rise
Philip Court	High rise
Clarke Court	Low rise
Copperas Gap Court	Low rise

Subject:	Delivery of support services for council sheltered housing tenants
Date of Meeting:	4 November 2008
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care and Housing
Contact Officer:	Name: Helen Clarkmead Tel: 293250
	E-mail: Helen.clarkmead@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision:	No
Wards Affected:	East Brighton, Goldsmid, Hangleton, Hanover and Elm Grove, Hollingbury and Stanmer, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, North Portslade, Patcham, Queens Park, St Peters and North Laine, South Portslade, Westbourne and Knoll, Wish.

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report outlines the redesign of the council's sheltered housing service. This is necessary in order address current service delivery issues, meet resident aspirations and accommodate budget pressures. The redesign seeks to provide high quality services and value for money.
- 1.2 The report also includes the review of service charges for supporting people reflecting the changes in service provision, and the review of the sheltered communal service charges.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Housing Management Consultative Committee recommend that the Housing Cabinet Member meeting:
- a) Note the changes to the sheltered support service to a team based service delivery model with non residential scheme managers and the proposed service charges.
 - b) Agree the revised communal services service charges as set out in Appendix 2 with effect from 6 April 2009.
 - c) Authorises the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing to implement the new service charges, but with power to make any minor amendments which may appear to be appropriate in particular cases.

3. CURRENT SHELTERED SERVICE PROVISION

- 3.1. The council has 24 sheltered schemes representing 855 units of accommodation. This represents half of the social rented sheltered stock in the city, and the council is by far the largest provider of sheltered housing.
- 3.2. The council currently operates a scheme manager based model with complex and expensive weekend and out of hours cover. This service is not currently meeting the needs of all service users and was last reviewed in 2000.

4. PROPOSED SHELTERED SERVICE PROVISION – TEAM BASED WORKING

- 4.1. The options for managing sheltered support services range from full residential scheme managers to floating support. The current service is based on the traditional residential scheme managers approach whereas the Supporting People strategy promotes the development of floating support for all. Following consultation with residents and an analysis of risk, advantages and disadvantages of each option a team based approach has been selected. This model is a sound compromise between fully traditional and flexible services and would meet most resident aspirations.
- 4.2. Team based working provides small teams of scheme managers working together managing a group of schemes in a geographic area or neighbourhood. The benefits of this approach compared to the current traditional model of provision are:
 - Improved use of staffing resources and even distribution of tenants to each scheme manager improving customer service by providing a consistent service to all tenants. The staff resources are allocated on the basis of units of accommodation rather than site management.
 - A team based approach will offer a mix of staff skills and experience to tenants. This approach will also aid staff development through joint working and allow automatic cover for staff absences allowing for a better continuity of service.
 - Improved recruitment and retention of staff. This will reduce future recruitment and training costs and allow retained staff to develop good relationships with tenants. Residential staff has been difficult to recruit in the last few years.
 - Team based working can also be better adapted to developing needs based or floating support services, if required by Supporting People.
 - Reduction in costs from recruitment, training overtime payments and rent subsidy for residential scheme managers that no longer required.

In addition to the Team based approach, it is proposed to review opportunities for improvements to the current weekend and out of hour's services through a resident working group.

5. SERVICE CHARGES

- 5.1. Sheltered tenants currently pay service charges for supporting people and communal services. The supporting people service charge is eligible for Supporting People grant and the communal areas service charge is eligible for housing benefit.
- 5.2. The supporting people service charge is currently a flat fee of £13.25 per week for each tenant and covers providing housing related support to enable vulnerable tenants to live independently within the community. For example this includes completing benefit forms, arranging adaptations or other professionals to call, arranging social events for residents.
- 5.3. Approximately 84% of sheltered tenants are eligible for supporting people grant funding to cover their service charge with the remaining tenants paying themselves. The service was initially set up as self financing but is now operating at a cost to the HRA of £46,000 per annum. This is because the income received from the Supporting People grant and tenants has only increased by 2.1% over the last five years whilst the expenditure, mainly salaries, has continued to increase annually by inflation.
- 5.4. The Commissioning Body has advised that the Supporting People grant funding will be reduced by 11.5% over the next three years with no allowance for inflation. This means that the service charge to tenants will reduce from £13.25 to £11.73 per week by 2011/12. The service has therefore been reviewed to ensure that future costs are fully recovered through the reduced service charges.
- 5.5. The communal services service charge includes communal cleaning, electricity costs, fire precaution equipment and materials. This service charge has been reviewed to ensure that costs are accurately recovered. The individual elements of the service charges including the increases or reductions are shown in Appendix 1. The main variation is from increased electricity costs averaging 83% from the new contract which was awarded on 1 April 2008.
- 5.6. Approximately 84% of sheltered tenants receive full or partial housing benefit to cover the communal areas service charges. Scheme Managers will work with the 38 tenants who will need to personally fund increases of more than £0.50 per week to ensure they are receiving all benefits to which they are entitled and offer general support.
- 5.7. Appendix 2 shows the net effect of the changes to both service charges for each sheltered scheme with effect from 1 April 2009 and also proposed changes to charges for 2010/11 which shows the full effect of the reductions in supporting people charges (but excluding an inflationary impact on the communal areas service charge).

6. EMERGENCY ALARM RESPONSE SERVICE

- 6.1. Tenants have asked that the service level and cost of the emergency alarm response service is reviewed. Residents will be at the heart of the process to agree and procure to a new service specification. There is substantial scope for budgetary savings which can then, in accordance with tenant's wishes, be invested in providing front line support services.

7 RESIDENTIAL SCHEME MANAGERS

- 7.1 Prior to sheltered schemes being supplied with emergency equipment linked to CareLink, residential staff were employed to respond to all out of hours emergencies and some schemes had two residential scheme managers to achieve this. But the advent of CareLink rendered the 'live-in' nature of residential staff of less importance.
- 7.2 Although residential staff have been retained as 'first point of contact' in an emergency where called by CareLink, there has been no requirement for staff to remain at home out of hours or work at weekends. As a result, the attendance of a residential scheme manager to attend an emergency was largely based on luck rather than a systematic approach.
- 7.3 Historically, some residential staff carried out duties at weekends even though they were not contracted to do so. Some undertook activities for which they were not employed or supervised to do, such as cook weekend meals, take residents on holidays and organise weekend social events. Some partners of residential staff not employed or supervised by the council also undertook a role in sheltered schemes. These activities have led to an unrealistic expectation of the services provided by residential staff. These activities also led to a blurring of professional boundaries in which a culture of favouritism or cases of elder abuse could thrive.
- 7.4 Residential working could also be stressful for staff who were effectively never off duty and potentially dangerous where clients of concern lived on site. As a result, some residential staff asked to become non-residential with the support of their union and occupational health. These issues also contributed to the problem of recruiting to residential posts. At the time of the Best Value Review in 2000, there were 22 residential staff. By 2008 this had fallen to just 5.
- 7.5 An employment tribunal decision in 2003 (the 'Harrow-Judgement') and recent changes to tax exemptions previously enjoyed by residential staff have also contributed to the increasing trend away from residential working.

- 7.6 It is therefore recommended that the service is confirmed as being non residential, as it is not a desirable or cost effective way of providing an out of hours service. This applies to new staff only. The five existing Residential Scheme Managers will be offered the opportunity to remain living on site, but without rent subsidy, whilst employed to deliver front line support services to sheltered tenants. Should any Residential Scheme Managers wish to move, they will be offered assistance.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There has been extensive consultation with tenants. This included a series of roadshows visiting sheltered schemes to specifically discuss operational service delivery issues. This complemented the earlier series of roadshows and extensive, wide ranging work of the Chairman's Focus Group for Sheltered Housing.
- 8.2 The majority of at tenants who participated in the roadshows preferred the team based model of service delivery, as this allows retention of the highly valued Scheme Manager role, but without the need for what is generally viewed as further, potentially unaffordable service charges. The majority of tenants agree the provision of out of hours cover should be reviewed for efficiency and value. Most tenants consulted expressed strong views that the out of hours service should be re specified, service levels agreed and procured in accordance with tenant wishes with an emphasis on better value for money and a less complex service.
- 8.3. The council welcomed the petition organised by the Sheltered Housing Action Group as presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee in July 2008. The overwhelmingly supported scheme manager services as opposed to floating support. The team based model has been developed to provide scheme manager based services within available budget. The model retains scheme managers with site management responsibilities, but uses this staff resource more effectively.
- 8.4 There will be a review of how the redesigned service operates, involving residents, 6 months after implementation. The outcome of this review will be reported back to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

9. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 9.1 The supporting people expenditure budget for 2008/09 is £635,530 against an income budget of £589,530 which shows a forecast under recovery of £46,000. The proposed changes to the service should ensure that all future costs are fully recovered through service charges and the 11.5% reduction over the next three years in the supporting people charge is achieved. The proposed expenditure budget for 2011/12 is £521,710 which provides a service charge of £11.73 per week.

The review of the sheltered common areas service charge has highlighted an under recovery of £19,800 which is due to the 83% increase in electricity costs.

Implementing the new charges from April 2009 will ensure all costs are fully recovered.

Further details regarding the service charge calculation are included in section 5 of the report and the Appendices.

The total savings achieved from removing the under recovery of these service charges of £65,800 will be included in the 2009/10 HRA Budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman Date: 01/10/2008

Legal Implications:

- 9.2 The Council is empowered to provide sheltered housing, and to impose a reasonable charge on tenants for that service.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 22/09/2008

Equalities Implications:

- 9.3 The proposed changes will ensure greater consistency in the support services provided to older vulnerable tenants.

Sustainability Implications:

- 9.4 There are no direct implications

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 9.5 There are no direct implications

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 9.6 There are no direct implications

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 9.7 There are no direct implications

10. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 10.1 The petition referred to at 7.3 above clearly demonstrated that tenants do not want to move to a floating support based model of service delivery. Roadshows confirmed this position. Floating support is becoming a less acceptable service delivery model across the sheltered housing sector.
- 10.2 Most tenants at the roadshows rejected the option for a more traditional model of one scheme manager for each scheme due to higher costs and lack of capacity to cover absences. A traditional model based on one scheme manager per scheme of up to 45 units and additional support for larger units would result in a weekly service charge of £17.57 per unit for 2009/10 of which £4.84 per week would not be eligible for Supporting People funding or Housing Benefit support. This would need to be funded by all tenants and would increase to £5.84 per week by 2011/12 (excluding inflation) in line with the future reductions in Supporting People grant. This model was rejected by tenants on the basis of affordability. The traditional model has far less flexibility in terms of staff cover and incurs high costs for agency staff when postholders are sick or leave the service.

11. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To advise tenants and members of the proposed sheltered service and of changes to communal areas and supporting people service charges.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Proposed Sheltered Communal Areas Service Charge with effect from 6 April 2009
2. Summary of proposed sheltered communal areas and supporting people charges with effect from 6 April 2009 compared to current charges. The table also shows charges in 2011/12 when the full reductions in supporting people charges will be in place.
3. Summary of resident consultation.

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

- 1.

PROPOSED SHELTERED COMMON AREAS SERVICE CHARGE WITH EFFECT FROM 6 APRIL 2009

APPENDIX 1

Scheme	Cleaning / window cleaning			Electricity			Alarm maintenance / fire precaution			Other supplies			Current charge total	Revised charge total	Diff	% Diff
	Current	Revised	Diff	Current	Revised	Diff	Current	Revised	Diff	Current	Revised	Diff				
Ainsworth House	2.93	2.67	(0.27)	2.67	3.02	0.35	0.74	0.54	(0.20)	0.26	0.28	0	6.61	6.51	(0.10)	-2%
Broadfields	3.64	3.30	(0.34)	3.65	3.46	(0.19)	0.56	0.51	(0.05)	0.26	0.28	0	8.12	7.56	(0.56)	-7%
Churchill House	6.15	5.56	(0.60)	1.20	1.23	0.03	0.57	0.53	(0.04)	0.26	0.28	0	8.18	7.59	(0.59)	-7%
Ditchling Gardens	2.16	1.97	(0.19)	0.17	0.14	(0.04)	0.56	0.54	(0.01)	0.26	0.28	0	3.15	2.93	(0.22)	-7%
Elizabeth Court	5.27	4.76	(0.51)	1.09	2.28	1.19	0.56	0.53	(0.03)	0.26	0.28	0	7.18	7.85	0.67	9%
Elwyn Jones Court	6.94	6.26	(0.68)	3.45	2.41	(1.03)	0.70	0.54	(0.16)	0.26	0.28	0	11.35	9.50	(1.85)	-16%
Evelyn Court	3.81	3.45	(0.36)	1.37	3.60	2.23	0.69	0.54	(0.14)	0.26	0.28	0	6.13	7.88	1.75	29%
Hazelholt	7.43	6.70	(0.73)	1.42	2.44	1.02	0.56	0.52	(0.03)	0.26	0.28	0	9.67	9.95	0.28	3%
Jasmine Court	2.81	2.56	(0.26)	1.27	2.85	1.58	0.71	0.53	(0.18)	0.26	0.28	0	5.05	6.21	1.16	23%
Jubilee Court	4.90	4.43	(0.47)	2.04	3.61	1.57	0.77	0.54	(0.23)	0.26	0.28	0	7.98	8.87	0.89	11%
Laburnum Grove	4.70	4.25	(0.45)	1.42	3.39	1.97	0.65	0.54	(0.12)	0.26	0.28	0	7.04	8.46	1.42	20%
Lavender House	3.88	3.52	(0.37)	1.66	3.60	1.94	0.56	0.52	(0.03)	0.26	0.28	0	6.36	7.93	1.57	25%
Leach Court	7.56	6.82	(0.74)	1.96	2.61	0.64	0.59	0.54	(0.05)	0.26	0.28	0	10.38	10.25	(0.13)	-1%
Windfield Court	6.51	5.88	(0.63)	2.32	2.51	0.19	0.56	0.54	(0.01)	0.26	0.28	0	9.66	9.22	(0.44)	-5%
Manor Paddock	2.33	2.13	(0.21)	1.69	2.17	0.48	0.57	0.54	(0.02)	0.26	0.28	0	4.85	5.13	0.28	6%
Muriel House	7.75	6.99	(0.76)	1.40	2.61	1.21	0.72	0.53	(0.19)	0.26	0.28	0	10.12	10.41	0.29	3%
Rose Hill Court	6.60	5.96	(0.64)	2.12	2.12	0.00	0.82	0.53	(0.29)	0.26	0.28	0	9.80	8.89	(0.91)	-9%
Sanders House	4.34	3.93	(0.41)	0.97	3.76	2.79	0.68	0.54	(0.13)	0.26	0.28	0	6.25	8.52	2.27	36%
Sloane Court	4.22	3.82	(0.40)	1.71	5.07	3.36	0.88	0.53	(0.35)	0.26	0.28	0	7.08	9.71	2.63	37%
Somerset Point	3.00	2.72	(0.28)	1.42	2.45	1.03	0.69	0.54	(0.15)	0.26	0.28	0	5.37	5.99	0.62	12%
Southsea	2.84	2.58	(0.26)	1.00	2.20	1.20	0.75	0.54	(0.21)	0.26	0.28	0	4.85	5.60	0.75	15%
Stonehurst Court	2.24	2.04	(0.20)	0.53	3.24	2.70	0.56	0.54	(0.01)	0.26	0.28	0	3.59	6.10	2.51	70%
Walter May House	3.83	3.47	(0.36)	1.55	2.53	0.98	0.63	0.53	(0.10)	0.26	0.28	0	6.27	6.81	0.54	9%
Woods House	4.93	4.46	(0.47)	1.30	1.96	0.67	0.61	0.54	(0.07)	0.26	0.28	0	7.10	7.25	0.15	2%

Note Assumed 2009/10 'current' charge is 2008/09 inflated by estimated RPI 4% plus 0.5%

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SHELTERED COMMON AREAS AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE CHARGES WITH EFFECT FROM 6 APRIL 2009

Scheme	No. units	Tenanted dwellings not on HB	Communal areas		Supporting People		Change		Year 3 (2011/12)	
			Current charge total	Reviewed charge total	change	Current charge	Reviewed charge	change	Total change	% Diff at year 3
Ainsworth House	19	1	6.61	6.51	(0.10)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.62)	-8%
Broadfields	15	5	8.12	7.56	(0.56)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(1.08)	-10%
Churchill House	36	4	8.18	7.59	(0.59)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(1.11)	-10%
Ditchling Gardens	26	7	3.15	2.93	(0.22)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.74)	-11%
Elizabeth Court	32	7	7.18	7.85	0.67	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.15	-4%
Elwyn Jones Court	72	16	11.35	9.50	(1.85)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(2.37)	-14%
Evelyn Court	22	7	6.13	7.88	1.75	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	1.23	1%
Hazelholt	24	2	9.67	9.95	0.28	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.24)	-5%
Jasmine Court	32	4	5.05	6.21	1.16	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.64	3%
Jubilee Court	29	2	7.98	8.87	0.89	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.37	2%
Laburnum Grove	59	11	7.04	8.46	1.42	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.90	4%
Laurel House	25	1	6.36	7.93	1.57	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	1.05	5%
Leach Court	108	15	10.38	10.25	(0.13)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.65)	-3%
Lindfield Court	31	4	9.66	9.22	(0.44)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.96)	-4%
Manor Paddock	24	3	4.85	5.13	0.28	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.24)	-1%
Muriel House	35	6	10.12	10.41	0.29	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.23)	-1%
Rose Hill Court	27	2	9.80	8.89	(0.91)	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(1.43)	-6%
Sanders House	38	4	6.25	8.52	2.27	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	1.75	9%
Sloane Court	40	6	7.08	9.71	2.63	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	2.11	10%
Somerset Point	71	8	5.37	5.99	0.62	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.10	1%
Southease	24	7	4.85	5.60	0.75	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.23	1%
Stonehurst Court	25	5	3.59	6.10	2.51	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	1.99	12%
Walter May House	32	2	6.27	6.81	0.54	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	0.02	0%
Woods House	26	6	7.10	7.25	0.15	13.25	12.73	(0.52)	(0.37)	-2%
Total units	872	135								

Note: Assumed 2009/10 'current' charge is 2008/09 inflated by estimated RPI 4% plus 0.5%. Year 3 charge excludes inflation on communal areas charge.

Appendix – Summary of the second round of roadshows

- 1.1 The second round of road shows was conducted at 19 of the 24 Council sheltered schemes between (some smaller schemes were 'twinned' up) between 8 September and 14 October 2008. 237 Residents talked to us at these events. Ward councillors attended some of the meetings.
- 1.2 At each meeting, there was a short presentation either by the Head of Housing Management for sheltered housing or Older Persons Housing Manager. This was normally followed by a short question and answer session and informal group discussions with feedback from each group at the end. Larger group discussion was held at a few schemes where it was not feasible to have smaller group discussion.
- 1.3 All residents were invited by letter, which included an information leaflet giving background information on the different proposals.
- 1.4 The discussions focused on a number of key areas:
 - A proposal to increase the number of scheme managers but with an increased cost of approximately £4.00 per week being levied.
 - A proposal to introduce team based working using the A proposal to implement floating support using the existing number of scheme managers without additional service charge.
 - A discussion about residential scheme managers.
 - A discussion around the out of hours service and whether the current mobile response element of the service should be changed.

2. More Scheme Managers – the 'Traditional Plus' model

- 2.1 The majority of residents were reluctant to pay for additional scheme managers. An increase in other utility bills and a limited income/pension was often sited as a reason why this couldn't be afforded. Views received included:
 - "Personally I don't think so"
 - "A lot of people haven't got this money"
 - " I can afford it but most people can't"
 - "We are Ok with a part time Scheme Manager here" (A resident at one of the smallest schemes with shared Scheme Manager at present)
 - "All tenants, not just sheltered, should pay this service charge"
- 2.2 Some residents were worried that any charge would increase in future years.

- 2.3 At some schemes which shared a scheme manager, residents didn't think that there was sufficient work for one full time scheme manager for each scheme and felt that the current working arrangements were sufficient.
- 2.4 A minority of residents said that they valued the scheme manager service and if this was the only way they could retain their scheme manager, they would be willing to pay the additional money.

3. Team Based Working

- 3.1 A majority of residents who expressed a view at the roadshows said that this was the best of the three options. Views received included:
- "I vote for that"
 - "the best way to go"
 - "I like this one"
 - "Not much difference to this service now"
 - "As long as it's carefully managed"
 - "A good compromise - we can keep our Scheme Manager without paying more"
 - "As long as the smaller schemes do not suffer"
 - "If we can keep our Scheme Manager in the team"
- 3.2 Many residents thought that this was the best way of allocating staff resources and thought it was unfair that scheme managers often had very different workloads, based on the size of their schemes.
- 3.3 Some thought that this model was quite similar to the one already provided.
- 3.4 There were however some questions which residents commonly raised when talking about team working:
- Where would scheme managers be based?
 - How would residents contact a scheme manager when off site?
 - Would there still be an alarm service?
 - What would happen if everyone within the team went sick or left?
 - What amount of time would a scheme manager spend on site?
- 3.5 Some were not keen on this idea and wondered how a team could get to know all residents and what would happen if the team workers were off site.

4. Floating Support

4.1 Overwhelmingly, residents said that this was the worst option and were very reluctant for this to be considered or discussed at all. Views received included:

- “No, no, no”
- “This leaves the rest of us out”
- “The third option is out”
- “It’s a non-starter”
- “No way!”
- “Why are we even talking about this?!”

4.2 Where comment was made, the following concerns were commonly noted:

- There wouldn’t be anyone on site to turn to.
- Security would be compromised and no-one would look after the building.
- There would be no continuity of service and familiar faces of staff might be lost.

5. Out of Hours Service.

5.1 The majority felt that it was important to have some form of alarm service.

5.2 The majority of residents didn’t feel that it was necessary to have a mobile response service where someone was available to attend in person. Indeed, some residents were surprised that there was a mobile response service, as their expectation was that when they used the alarm, the emergency services would be called.

5.3 However, a few residents who had a mobile officer attending to them said it was useful.

5.4 Residents said that the council should look at different types of service and different service providers – especially if savings could be made.

5.5 Residents said that what they wanted was a quick response service when they pulled the alarm, and where there was criticism of the existing service, residents complained that it was sometimes too slow in responding.

5.6 Residents who had a pendant alarm felt this to be useful and that these should be made widely available.

5.7 There was sometimes discussion about access to keys in an emergency – some residents said that neighbours could be key holders.

5.8 Views expressed included:

- “most emergencies require the emergency services”
- “if it’s an emergency, call me an ambulance”
- “CareLink take time to come out - what is needed is the emergency service response”
- “Sending people out can delay emergency help”
- “Look at a system that links directly to emergency services, cut out the response centre”

6. Residential Scheme Managers

6.1 Generally, residents accepted that the continued provision of a residential based service was not viable as staff could not be recruited

to live-in posts. There were very mixed views as to if residential working

was beneficial. One scheme where the service had recently changed to

non residential strongly preferred the new arrangement.

There were a number of common responses in this discussion:

- The existing scheme managers should be allowed to stay until they stopped working for the sheltered housing service.
- If they do not want to live on site then the council should rehouse them
- The council should let the former manager’s flats as sheltered units.

Consultation Roadshows – September/October 2008 Summary

Date	Site	Attendees	Majority Preference
September 8	Elwyn Jones Court	17	Team model
September 9	Jubilee Court	7	No consensus
September 11	Leach Court	24	Team model with the proviso this does not disadvantage smaller schemes
September 12	Hazleholt	5	Team model
September 15	Evelyn Court	6	Team model

September 16	Rosehill Court (with residents of Ainsworth House)	12	Team model
September 18	Laburnum Grove	19	Team model if carefully managed.
September 22	Sloane Court (with residents of Lavender House)	15	Traditional plus with additional service charge
September 23	Elizabeth Court (with residents of Woods House)	15	Split between traditional plus with additional service charge and team models
September 24	Sanders House	16	Team model
September 25	Southease (with residents of Walter May House)	18	Team model
September 29	Stonehurst Court	6	Team model
September 30	Manor Paddock	9	Team model
October 6	Broadfields	13	Team model
October 8	Lindfield Court	13	Team model
October 9	Churchill House	14	Team model
October 13	Jasmine Court	10	Team model
October 14	Somerset Point	18 (30)*	Split between traditional plus with service charge and team models

Notes: * - At Somerset Point, some non residents attended the event as it took the place of a regular coffee morning.

Helen Clarkmead 17/10/2008 Appendix consultation summary v2

Subject: Value for Money Review of Housing Services
Date of Meeting: 4th November 2008
Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing
Contact Officer: Name: Nick Hibberd Tel: 29-3756
E-mail: Nick.hibberd@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: Yes Forward Plan No. HSG 0012
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To provide the Housing Management Consultative Committee with an overview of the findings of the Value for Money review of Housing Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) That the Housing Management Consultative Committee consider the findings of the Value for Money Review of Housing Services, and the value for money action plan, attached as an appendix to the report (appendix 1).

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove's Draft Housing Strategy 2008-2013 is aimed at:

"Enabling healthy homes, healthy lives and a healthy city that reduces inequality and offers independence, choice and a high quality of life"

The strategy has 3 overall priorities:

- Strategic Priority 1: Improving housing supply
- Strategic Priority 2: Improving housing quality
- Strategic Priority 3: Improving housing support

- 3.2 Actions to address these priorities aim to ensure we have enough of the right type of high quality housing in the city to meet the needs of local people and that those in need are provided with appropriate support to enable them to maintain their independence.

- 3.3 Value for Money is identified as one of six fundamental principles that underpin the Housing Strategy 2008-2013. These principles ensure that the Housing Strategy goes beyond the traditional focus upon bricks and mortar focus to deliver real change. The six strategic principles of the Housing Strategy are:
- A healthy city
 - Reducing inequality
 - Improving neighbourhoods
 - Accountability to local people
 - Value for money
 - Partnership working
- 3.4 Principle 5: 'Value for Money', recognises that services delivered by the Council and its partners are affected by constant funding pressures and competing demands. The strategy recognises the need to make sure that the services we deliver are the right services, that they are delivered efficiently and targeted in such a way that will provide maximum impact and benefit for the resources available.

4. SCOPE OF THE VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW

- 4.1 Brighton & Hove City Council is undertaking a corporate Value for Money (VfM) programme, involving a rolling cycle of service improvement work which will review all council services by autumn 2008.
- 4.2 The scope of the review covered the housing functions in the Adult Social Care & Housing Directorate, i.e. the following service divisions:
- Housing Strategy
 - Housing Management
- 4.3 The VfM Steering Group agreed that the review should focus on the following areas:
- Strategic approach to housing need and homelessness
 - ICT
 - Sickness absence
 - Staffing costs (use of agency staff)
- 4.4 A VfM review team was convened to undertake the review, using the corporate VfM review methodology and toolkit. The review team is made up of senior managers from:
- Housing Management
 - Housing Strategy
 - Financial Services
 - Improvement & Organisational Development

5. FINDINGS OF THE VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW

- 5.1 The final report (attached) includes a high level analysis of recent, current and planned VfM work across housing services. Opportunities for VfM improvements have been identified, prioritised and included in an action plan which is appended to the main report. Delivery of opportunities and progress towards targets will be monitored by the VfM Programme Board.
- 5.2 Housing is currently undergoing a number of major changes which should bring significant financial benefits and improved outcomes for service users and tenants. Following the outcome of the tenants' stock transfer ballot, officers reviewed strategic housing options to reflect the decision that the stock will be retained by the council and identified a strategy to fund the investment gap to achieve Decent Homes Standard and meet tenant aspirations for improvements to the stock. Two key approaches have been followed:
- A Procurement Strategy that would see the council enter into a long term partnership agreement for the maintenance and improvement of the council housing stock, reducing overheads and direct costs. The Procurement Strategy for the HRA stock was approved by Policy & Resources Committee on 3 April 2008.
 - An asset management plan, which could see the creation of a Local Delivery Vehicle that would sit outside the council to utilise HRA assets requiring reinvestment and not occupied by Secure Tenants leveraging in additional investment to improve the council housing stock
- 5.3 The review found that value for money has been considered when planning and improving the Housing Needs Service, and in the strategic commissioning of accommodation for vulnerable groups. The Housing Strategy division has made considerable progress in developing a preventative approach to homelessness which has led to the budget no longer being classed as critical and improved outcomes for service users. Levels of homelessness prevention due to housing advice casework (BV213) remain top quartile compared to nearest neighbour authorities, and the council remains on track to meet the government's target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010.
- 5.4 The review also found that the Housing Needs Service has strong partnership working with other BHCC directorates in the provision of housing need/homelessness support to Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT) and Adult Social Care (ASC). This has produced value for money benefits in providing a coordinated approach to housing need and temporary accommodation across the authority with improved procurement and less duplication of effort and spend.

- 5.5 In addition to these major initiatives there are a number of other positive value for money initiatives across both divisions, these include:
- Successful strategic commissioning through the Supporting People Programme, through initiatives such as the Single Homeless Integrated Support Pathway
 - The Brighton & Hove, East Sussex Together Partnership (BEST), led by Brighton & Hove City Council, has been allocated £18.6 million over three years to improve the living conditions of vulnerable households in the private sector
 - Efficiency savings achieved through improved contract management of the partnering contracts for the repairs and maintenance of the housing stock
 - A reduction in empty property turn-around time for council properties
 - A tenant-led review of Estate Services in Housing Management

- 5.6 The review also identified areas where there are opportunities to improve value for money. Headline findings from the review include:
- The opportunity to further improving links between the Housing Management and Housing Strategy divisions
 - The need to reduce the use of agency staff in both divisions
 - The need to maximise the value for money benefits of an effective ICT strategy
 - The need to continue the progress that has been made in reducing levels of sickness absence in both divisions
 - The need to develop a business case identifying the potential wider VfM benefits from investing in adaptations
 - The opportunity to reduce current expenditure on the storage of belongings for homeless households
 - The need to reduce unit costs in Housing Management
 - There is potential to continue the recent improvements in income collection in Housing Management, through the introduction of a marketing strategy and exploration of a 50 week rental year.

- 5.7 These issues are addressed in the appended action plan.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The review process involved interviews with identified staff and a workshop with senior managers.
- 6.2 The final report will be considered by Adult Social Care & Housing Scrutiny Committee on 06th November 2008

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Financial Implications:

The Value for Money review identifies a number of actions within the Action Plan which should result in savings to both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Housing Services. Target HRA savings particularly in Housing Management costs, agency staff and ICT have been included in the 30 year HRA Business Plan and will be included in future year's HRA Budget Reports, as appropriate. Target savings in General Fund services such as storage costs and agency costs for homelessness will be included in the General Fund Budget Strategy.

Finance Officer Consulted: Sue Chapman

Date: 14th Oct 08

7.2 Legal Implications:

The Council is responsible for ensuring that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively. The value for money action plan will assist in meeting that responsibility. There are no immediate Human Rights Act implications arising from the report. However, in implementing the action plan, the council will need to have regard to the effect of the proposed measures on any individual's human rights.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 14 Oct 08

7.3 Equalities Implications:

There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

7.4 Sustainability Implications:

There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report. The Draft Housing Strategy 2008-2013 includes a commitment to reducing fuel poverty and improving the energy efficiency of homes in the city through the Energy Efficiency Strategy.

7.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7.6 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Providing the homes that people need is a key aspect of delivering priority one of the Corporate Plan 2008-2011: '*Protect the environment while growing the economy*'.

7. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

7.1 Not applicable to this report.

8. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Housing Management Consultative Committee are asked to note and comment upon the findings of the recent Value for Money Review of Housing Services.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

VfM Review of Housing Report

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

Brighton & Hove City Council: Value for Money Programme

Housing Report

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Contents

	Page number
1. Introduction	5
2. Approach	5
3. Housing Strategy	7
4. Housing Management	11
5. Cross-cutting issues	14
6. VfM Action Plan	17
7. Appendix 1 (charts and tables)	20

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Introduction

1. As part of improving our performance on the use of resources, the council is undertaking a corporate Value for Money (VfM) Programme looking at comparative spend on all leading service areas in a 12 month period.
2. This report focuses on VfM 'hot spot' areas within Housing and potential improvement opportunities. The action plan on page 16-19 provides an overview of the review findings and recommendations.
3. Brighton & Hove City Council's Housing division is composed of two services; Housing Strategy and Housing Management. The service as a whole achieved 3 out of 4 in the 2007 CPA assessment (comprising of 4:4 for Housing Strategy and 2:4 for Housing Management). This report has been split into three sections; Housing Strategy, Housing Management and cross-cutting issues. More detailed performance and comparison tables and charts can be found in appendix 1.
4. Housing Management is currently undergoing a major service transformation which it is anticipated will bring significant financial benefits and improved outcomes for service users and tenants. Changes currently underway include the development of a housing Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV), a innovative long-term partnering Procurement Strategy for the council's housing stock and a 3 year Service Improvement Plan for Housing Management. The second phase of LDV development has recently been approved by Cabinet and this could bring in up to £45M in additional funding as well as improvements to units of temporary housing. The long term partnering contracts for the repairs and maintenance of the housing stock will commence in April 2010 and lead to substantial year on year savings in the council's maintenance costs. The 3 year Service Improvement plan will provide a new strategic focus and enable a service review with the aim of the overall unit cost of the service.

Approach

5. The approach is based on a good practice model developed by PricewaterhouseCoopers with review outputs including priorities for improvement and performance measures for monitoring and reporting. The focus of the review has been on analysing the service 'as is' rather than a detailed 'backward look' with an emphasis on developing a prioritised list of VfM opportunities that the service can begin to implement. The corporate methodology follows a five stage process detailed below:

Review stage	Key actions
1. Preparing for the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing scope • Establishing review team • Initial data gathering
2. Reviewing existing service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with ADs & Heads of Service • Analysis of data • Analysis of best practise information
3. Prioritise areas of the service for improving VFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of data and interviews • Development of VfM opportunities long-list
4. Identify VfM improvement projects & final report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities short-listing workshop • Development of report • Reporting to VfM Steering Group
5. Target setting, monitoring and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key deliverables and monitoring schedule agreed • Start of implementation of quick-wins • Development of transformation plan

A. Housing Strategy

6. Housing Strategy manages the council's strategic and community housing functions, including the following areas:

The Housing Strategy

- Housing Needs and Homelessness
- Temporary Accommodation
- Private Sector Housing
- Single Homelessness
- Supporting People

7. The net budget for 2008/9 is £6.1M (excluding support services costs). The service also manages the Supporting People grant which totals £12.5M for the same period. Housing Strategy has scored 4 out of 4 in recent CPA assessments. Supporting People was classed a 'good service with promising prospects for improvement' in a 2007 Audit Commission inspection. Brighton & Hove has well above average instances of homelessness and housing related problems. Housing is therefore a key priority for the council and this is reflected in the comparatively high level of funding in order to provide a high quality service.
8. Housing Strategy has taken account of Value for Money when planning and improving services through a service improvement exercises including a VfM review of Homeless spend and the strategic commissioning of services for single homeless people. Housing Strategy also manages services for people with Learning Difficulties and has made significant financial savings in this area. Learning Difficulties were included in the earlier VfM review of Adult Social Care are therefore not included in the scope of this review.

Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation

9. The Audit Commission VfM comparators identify BHCC second to top of its group from spend on homelessness per head of population (see appendix 1). Homelessness has traditionally been a key financial pressure for the council and the homeless budget was classed as a corporate critical budget. In the past this has been characterised as an intractable problem due to the high number of homeless people 'attracted' to the city and the higher than average size of the private rented sector.
10. The division has made considerable progress in developing a preventative approach to homelessness which has led to the budget no longer being classed as critical and improved outcomes for service users. The service has moved resources from dealing with statutory homelessness to supporting preventative actions and providing housing advice (and has the highest portion of overall spending on prevention amongst the authorities benchmarked in the Acclaim study below). Statutory homelessness acceptances have decreased from 925 in 2003/04 to 439 in 2007/8 (see appendix 1) and a reduction from 666 households in temporary

accommodation to 482 over the same period. Levels of homelessness prevention due to housing advice casework (BV213) remain top quartile compared to nearest neighbour authorities, and the council remains on track to meet the government's target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010.

11. The service has recently undertaken a Value for Money exercise which included benchmarking led by Acclaim consulting. Acclaim used a comparator group based on London Boroughs which they argue have more similarities in terms of homelessness with Brighton & Hove than most authorities in the Audit Commission comparator group. BHCC compare well in the majority of areas of homelessness spend including:
 - Lowest unit costs per prevention (see appendix 1)
 - Low unit cost for emergency accommodation
 - The lowest annual cost for units of temporary accommodation.
12. The report also identified some areas where BHCC compares less favourably including the highest costs for storage in the group, high costs for non-block booked Bed & Breakfast and bottom quartile for percentage of people in Temporary Accommodation in Bed & Breakfast. The service has developed an action plan to address these issues.
13. The service has good partnership working with other BHCC directorates in the provision of housing need/homelessness support to Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT) and Adult Social Care (ASC). This has produced VfM benefits in providing a coordinated approach to housing need and temporary accommodation across the authority with improved procurement and less duplication of effort and spend. This has also improved outcomes for service users improving the timeliness and quality of temporary accommodation and its provision. More work need to be undertaken to identify the extent and financial benefits of this joint working. The Acclaim exercise identified that BHCC reporting used in the Audit Commission profiles includes non-statutory homelessness costs (particularly for ASC and CYPT). Exclusion would reduce from cost per head from £12 to closer to £7 and compare more favourably to the council's in the comparator group (see appendix 1).

Adaptations

14. The Private Sector Housing Team provide an adaptations service for council, housing association and private sector tenants, and owner occupiers. The annual adaptations budget is £750K for council tenants and £1M for others (provided through the Disabled Facilities Grant). The budget is in high demand and there is a waiting list of applicants.
15. The service has taken steps to ensure that housing options are considered at an early stage in the application processes so that a move to a more suitable adapted property is considered before expensive adaptations are undertaken. It is essential that this is further developed (in conjunction with ASC and

CYPT) to stop unnecessary waiting times and spend. Options to offer financial support to owner occupiers for moving to a more suitable property rather than adapting their existing home should also be investigated (as successfully used in Eastbourne and Hastings).

16. Adaptations have wider financial impacts. Time on the waiting list or adaptations to unsuitable properties can affect other service areas (e.g. need for Home Care whilst waiting or having to remove adaptations from unsuitable council properties once the resident has left). The Department for Local Government and Communities (DCLG) has presented a case for investing in adaptations in order to gain wider VfM benefits across council functions. Some initial work has been undertaken to develop a business case for BHCC, but further analysis needs to be completed to understand local costs and benefits. This work will continue and is included in the attached action plan.

Housing Strategy successes

17. Housing Strategy have successfully improved and developed some of their services to improve VfM and bring additional funding to the council. Recent successes include:

Supporting People

18. The Supporting People team have effectively developed their strategy in order to manage a reduction in their grant of 10% over 3 years. The service has improved its strategic approach to commissioning and managed (using a VfM tool) to increase the number of units of support it provides to vulnerable people within this reducing grant framework.

Single Homeless Integrated Support Pathway

19. The Single Homeless Team has managed the reduction in Supporting People funding whilst improving outcomes for single homeless people. The Integrated Support Pathway has aligned third sector organisations in the city to the council's strategic objectives and provided a higher level of support to enable single homeless people to gain employment and stable housing. This work has been recognised by the government as best practice and brought in additional funding.
20. Following the Supporting People Grant Announcement in January 2008, the Supporting People team were required to find savings of 11.5% over a three year period. This represented £776,827 from services within the 'Social Excluded Cluster Group', the majority of which sit within the Integrated Support Pathway.
21. In order to meet this savings target, and deliver new services identified as gaps in provision by the Supporting People Strategy Review, it was necessary to decommission some services that were not as closely aligned to the Supporting People Strategy as other services. The impact of the

decommissioning of these services is being mitigated through a combination of remodelling of existing services and exploring other move on options for service users whose complex needs cannot be met from within the Pathway.

BEST Private Sector Renewal funding

22. The Private Sector team have successfully led a regional bid for Private Sector Renewal funding. This has brought an additional £8M to the city which is being used to improve Private Sector properties.

B. Housing Management

23. Brighton & Hove Council owns around 12,000 council homes and manages 2,000 leasehold properties. The service was awarded 1 star out of a possible 3 in a 2005 inspection by the Audit commission and classed as 'a fair service with promising prospects for improvement'. The estimated cost of the service for 2008/9 is £46.2M. The service is funded through rent collection via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
24. In February 2007 Brighton & Hove tenants voted to retain the housing stock under the direct control of the council. This has resulted in a funding gap if the council is to bring all homes to meet the Decent Homes standard. Council officers and consultants have been working to reduce this funding gap with a programme of savings and a new 10 year Procurement Strategy. A large amount of council resource is already focused on addressing this issue and it has therefore been excluded from the scope of this review.

Unit costs and management structure

25. Unit costs for Housing Management are high at £17.28 cost per property for 2007/8. This puts BHCC close to the top quartile when compared to other local authorities. The service is making efforts to address this and unit cost has reduced from 2005/6 cost of £18.58 per property. Satisfaction amongst tenants is in the lowest quartile for Unitary Authorities at 72%.
26. Analysis of previous reviews and interviews with managers revealed concerns that the service's current structure is not effective. The current structure has dedicated teams for functions including rent collection, lettings and estate services, mixed with an area based tenancy management function. This has led to an element of confusion regarding lines of responsibility and inconsistencies in practices between areas (for example how Housing Officers deal with tenancy enforcement and interact with the dedicated teams). The resulting management structure is large to accommodate these responsibilities and therefore high cost. A new 3-year Service Improvement Plan for the service is currently under development and it is recommended that the service is restructured to support the framework, improve clarity of lines of responsibility and reduce unit costs.
27. Housing management has a devolved structure with separate access points for each of the management areas as well as for the repairs and specialist teams. This can mean that customer enquiries are often not resolved at first contact, whilst transaction costs are high and inefficiencies exist. The service would benefit from a customer access and business process review. This work should be linked to the council's corporate customer Access Strategy.

Repairs and Maintenance

28. Unit costs for maintenance are high and in the top quartile in the Audit Commission comparator group for 2006/7 (see appendix 1). However Housing Management costs fell to £17.37 in 2007/8 for the first time in several

years from £18.82 in 2006/07. This was achieved through a reduction in responsive repairs, improved contracting/partnering and capitalisation of some costs. Work has also been undertaken to review all housing management assets and produce a prioritised model for improving the overall housing stock to meet the Brighton & Hove Standard.

29. The proposals in the Procurement Strategy for the repair and maintenance of the stock should lead to significant financial savings and improved outcomes for tenants. The service has also made VfM improvements to its current contracting arrangements (see point 33). However there is potential to gain efficiencies by joining contracts for works not covered by the 10 year agreements with other (non-housing) corporate contracts, for example lift maintenance, asbestos removal etc. Work should be undertaken to produce a forward plan of both corporate and housing contracts, and to tender them jointly where appropriate.

Income Collection

30. Income collection has seen a steady improvement since the establishment of the dedicated team. The team provide a more consistent and systematic approach than under previous arrangements where the function was devolved to area Housing Officers. Performance is now at 97.7% which has moved the council out of the bottom quartile for the first time in recent years and puts BHCC closer to the median when compared to other Unitary Authorities (see appendix 1).
31. There are opportunities for further improving performance and reducing the total amount of outstanding rent. The adoption of a 48 or 50 week rent year with those in arrears continuing to pay for 52 weeks has been effectively used by other providers. Other successful initiatives include marketing campaigns that emphasise the consequences of not paying rent. It is recommended that the council considers these examples of best practice in income collection.

Recharging

32. The authority is currently not maximising opportunities for recharging, for example properties that are left in poor condition and unauthorised repairs. Where recharges are made, payment is not always effectively pursued. Work should also be undertaken to ensure that those who leave properties in a state of disrepair or undertake unauthorised work on their homes are recharged, and that every effort is made to ensure that the outstanding charges are collected.

Housing Management successes

33. Housing management have successfully improved and developed some of their services:

Improved contracting

34. As well as developing the longer term Procurement Strategy, steps have been taken to improve current contracts and the service is working to develop an 'open book' approach with its key contractors. The service has made substantial savings through improved procurement; including a reduction in the unit cost from £4,779 to £3,100 for kitchens and from £2,800 to £1,780 for bathrooms between 2006/7 and 2007/8. Substantial savings have also been made in procurement of doors through the London Housing Consortia and improvements to cyclical repairs and redecorations.

Empty properties

35. Significant improvements have been achieved in empty property turn-around times. The average turn around time has been reduced over the past year, dropping from 35 days in 2006/7 to 31 in 2007/8 (see appendix 1). This results in people moving out of temporary or unsuitable accommodation more quickly and has a positive impact on the Bed & Breakfast budget. There is also a reduction in the amount of rent 'lost' through vacancy.

Estate Services review

36. A review of Estate Services is underway to look at the future provision of the service. The review has followed the recommendations made by tenants through councillor led focus groups and has already resulted in developments to the service that have been widely supported.

C. Cross cutting issues

37. A number of areas have been identified that have VfM implications for both Housing Strategy and Housing Management:

Housing Green Paper

38. Proposals to develop a detailed business case to establish a Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) as outlined in the government's Housing Green Paper have recently been agreed by councillors and tenants groups. The council is committed to creating an LDV without the involvement of a Registered Social Landlord, freehold transfers or the transfer of tenanted properties. As well as bringing additional investment the LDV is expected to bring wider social benefits by helping to meet housing need in the city.
39. Work has been undertaken by leading financial and legal experts who have concluded that there are a number of viable options to create a LDV in Brighton & Hove within these constraints. Financial modelling by PwC will help ensure that the LDV delivers value for money and indicates that significant financial benefits are achievable. PwC estimate that the LDV will generate up to £45M in additional funding for improving the council's housing stock.

Links between Housing Strategy and Management

40. Housing Strategy and Management are arranged as two separate services with little shared functions. The separation is partly due to the differing funding arrangements (HRA, General Fund and the Supporting People grant) and historical factors. The proposal to transfer Housing Management created a logical need to keep the services separate in order to make the transition as smooth as possible in the event of a 'yes' vote. The tenants' decision to retain the council as their landlord means that opportunities exist to increase and improve joint working across the services. The new Housing Strategy 2008-2013 provides the strategic framework for improvement in this area.
41. The division currently has multiple customer access points across both services. There is scope for better integration of these access points and joining-up elements of customer access in line with the strategic 'housing options' approach to addressing housing need. Opportunities also exist for learning from best practice across the services, for example Housing Strategy's VfM focused approach to service improvement and Housing Managements improvements in void turn-around times. It is recommended that opportunities for integrating teams and joining-up elements of customer access in line with the council's 'Access Vision' are reviewed.

ICT

42. Issues with ICT systems were identified across both divisions and ICT was often cited as not supporting business processes and hampering improvements to the service. Particular frustration related to the OHMS system which is used across both services. Benchmarking of Housing Management costs via the Housemark network identifies BHCC as having a higher percentage of overall spend on IT than many other providers (Based on 2004/5 data). Although ICT should not drive improvements in the service it is important that the ICT infrastructure is effective in supporting any new customer access initiatives, the new Service Improvement Plan and the delivery of the Procurement Strategy for Housing Management.
43. The service is yet to implement effective mobile working and an initial pilot failed due to difficulties linking current systems to the mobile solution. Mobile working has been used effectively by other providers to improve working practices and deliver efficiencies. Successful examples include Lewisham LBC who have delivered £120K per year saving through mobile working for surveyors and Peterborough City Council who used mobile solutions to help deliver £1.8M of savings. Further development of mobile working should be investigated, but it is essential that any future projects have a robust business case.
44. Processes across housing are often paper-based and records are mainly manually stored and retrieved. The service may benefit from participation in the corporate Electronic Document and Record Management (EDRM) programme. Work should be undertaken to produce a business case identifying areas of Housing that would benefit from inclusion in the programme, as well as identifying the costs involved and efficiencies that could be gained.

Sickness absence

45. Sickness absence figures show that Housing Strategy and Housing Management have high levels of sickness absence within the authority. There are a number of long-term absences, however short-term absences account for a significant portion of the overall figure. Sickness absence has VfM implications for staffing levels, service delivery, and use of agency staff.
46. The council has recently initiated a sickness absence pilot in which Housing have been identified as a participants. The pilot includes improvements to reporting and monitoring, HR support, use of Occupational Health, use of flexible working and training for HR and Housing managers. Initial analysis shows a positive impact of this initiative with significant reductions in sickness absence in Housing Management.

Agency Staff

47. The services spent in excess of £1.3M on agency staff in 2007/8. Housing Strategy's agency costs were £555K with agency staff used to cover for sickness absence and deal with service peaks (e.g. summer months when the number of homeless enquiries increases). Housing Management's costs were £820K for the same period with a portion of this relating to covering vacancies in the Estate Services team whilst it was under review, and some sheltered housing posts that have been difficult to recruit to permanently. Anecdotal evidence suggests that agency employees can sometimes provide better value for money than other options, however more work needs to be undertaken to identify actual costs and benefits. It is recommended that targets are set for reducing the annual spend on agency staff.
48. Housing Management is currently completing reviews of the estate service and of sheltered housing. An expected outcome of these reviews is the reduction in the use of agency staff.

Value for Money opportunities and action plan

49. The various VfM opportunities identified in the review have been grouped and summarised into a VfM action plan (starting on the next page). A workshop was held with senior Housing managers in order to prioritise the opportunities and agree timescales for the action plan.

Ref	VfM issue	Objective	Lead	Timescale	Performance measures
H1	Links between Housing Management (HM) and Housing Strategy (HS) PRIORITY = HIGH	Housing wide review of customer access. Link to customer Access Vision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including Business Process Improvement work. 	Nick Hibberd and Jugal Sharma	Review completed by end Mar 2009 Implementation start by May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in customer satisfaction (Target increase by % Increase in number and use of access channels Reduction in duplication of access channels
H2	Use of agency staff PRIORITY = HIGH	Evaluate costs and benefits of key areas of agency staff use. Set clear targets for reducing annual spend on agency staff and consultants.	Nick Hibberd and Jugal Sharma	Cost benefit analysis by December 2008 Targets set for reporting in April 2009	Spend on agency staff (Target = reduction by 25%)
H3	Unit costs for housing management service PRIORITY = HIGH	Service redesign to reflect new strategic framework for Housing Management	Nick Hibberd	Housing Management 3 year Service Improvement Plan agreed by November 2008 Service structures reviewed and redesign implemented during 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Management Unit Cost (target = reduction by £4)
H4	ICT systems not always fit for purpose PRIORITY =	Review of ICT needs, costs and options for future	Steve Corbett	Initial review complete by November 2008 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Case for joining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of ICT as % of overall spend (target = reduction % of overall spend)

Ref	VfM issue	Objective	Lead	Timescale	Performance measures
	MEDIUM			<p>corporate Electronic Document & Record Management May 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business case for mobile working development/pilot May 2009 	
H5	Income collection performance PRIORITY = MEDIUM	Implement measures to increase rent collection	David Rook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce 48 or 50 week rent year from April 2010 Focused rent arrears marketing strategy agreed by Mar 09. Marketing campaign during 2009/10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of rent collected (target = increase by 0.5%)
H6	level of sickness absence PRIORITY = HIGH	Participate in Sickness absence pilot	Nick Hibberd and Jugal Sharma	Evaluation of sickness pilot by March 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average days per employee (reduction in average number of days. Target = 9 days)
H7	Storage costs for Homeless households in TA PRIORITY = MEDIUM	Introduce charge for storage/or sign-post only	Steve Bulbeck and Sylvia Peckham	Storage recharging implemented by December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storage costs (target = reduction in storage costs to at least average in benchmarking exercise)

Ref	VfM issue	Objective	Lead	Timescale	Performance measures
H8	Adaptations (cross cutting impact CYPT and ASC) PRIORITY = HIGH	Identify local costs, impact and potential VfM benefits of changing policies and spend on adaptations. And identify spend to save opportunities	Martin Reid	Develop Business Case for increasing adaptations funding based on local cost benefit analysis by January 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance measure should be identified as part of this work
H9	Separate Housing Management and corporate procurement strategies and contracts PRIORITY = MEDIUM	Identify all potential repairs and maintenance areas with potential for single contract and develop forward plan	Nick Hibberd	Forward plan produced by December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of joint contracts
H10	Homeless cost per head PRIORITY = HIGH	<p>Ensure that costs and benefits of corporate commissioning of temporary contracts for social care clients are understood and identified.</p> <p>Distinguish costs of statutory homelessness from other types of homelessness in financial records and reporting.</p> <p>Implement Housing Need VfM review opportunities</p>	Steve Bulbeck and Sylvia Peckham	<p>Cost benefit analysis by April 2009</p> <p>Separate reporting by April 2009</p> <p>Implement recommendations by November 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness cost per head (target = reduction £)

Appendix 1 – Charts and tables

Table 1: Housing CPA score (from Audit commission VfM profile)

Chart 1: Homeless applications and acceptances 2001/02-2007/08

Table 2: Homelessness cost per head (from Audit commission VfM profiles)

Chart 2: Actual cost of homelessness/£ pre head (from Acclaim benchmarking exercise)

Chart 2a Temporary Accommodation targets and projections

Table 3: Average management cost per unit (from Audit commission VfM profiles)

Chart 3: Brighton & Hove Housing management £ per property over time

Chart 4: BHCC percentage of rent collected over time

Table 5: Weekly maintenance £ per property (from Audit commission VfM profiles)

Table 1: Housing CPA score (from Audit commission VfM profile)

Authority name	2007
Blackpool Council	4
Bath And North East Somerset Council	4
Sefton Council	3
Southampton City Council	3
Brighton and Hove City Council	3
Reading Borough Council	3
Portsmouth City Council	3
Plymouth City Council	3
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	3
City of York Council	3
North Tyneside Council	3
Bournemouth Borough Council	2
Southend on Sea Borough Council	2
Bristol City Council	2
Coventry City Council	2
Torbay Council	2

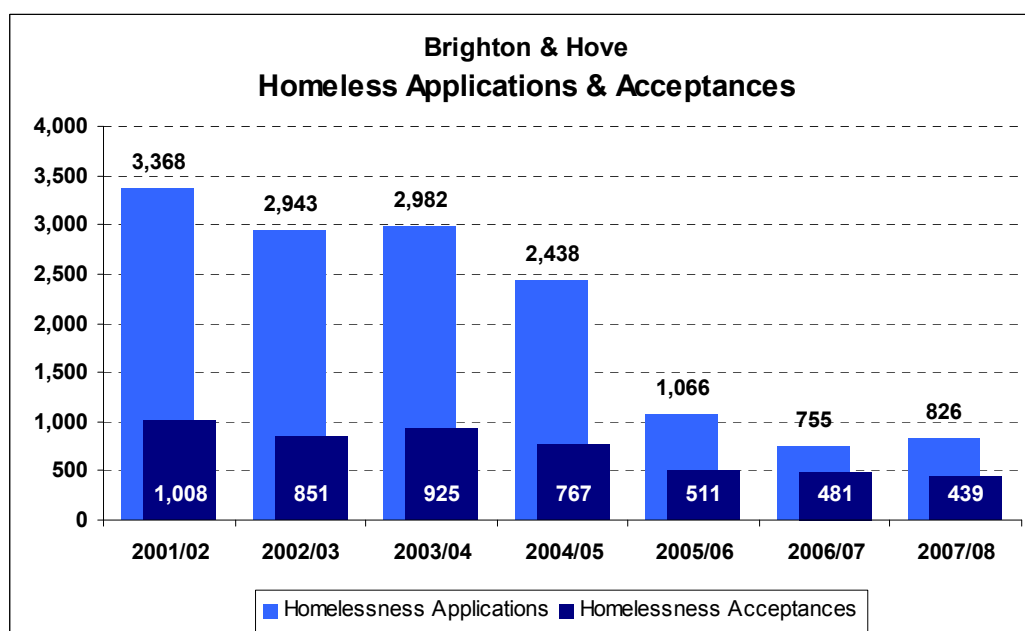
Chart 1

Table 2: Homelessness cost per head (from Audit commission VfM profiles)

Authority name	2007
Torbay Council	17.54
Brighton and Hove City Council	16.53
Bristol City Council	12.86
Southend on Sea Borough Council	8.56
Bournemouth Borough Council	8.34
Southampton City Council	6.54
Reading Borough Council	5.86
Bath And North East Somerset Council	5.22
Portsmouth City Council	4.10
City of York Council	4.05
Blackpool Council	4.04
Plymouth City Council	4.03
Coventry City Council	2.57
North Tyneside Council	2.28
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	2.08
Sefton Council	1.56

Chart 2: Actual cost of homelessness/£ pre head (from Acclaim benchmarking exercise)

Benchmarked Activity	Total homelessness cost per head (adjusted population) <i>(NB: Interim & Temporary Accommodation for Client Side only)</i>	
	Brighton & Hove Result	Comparator Group Results
1. Prevention & Housing Advice	£4.4 (63%)	Median £5.0 (50%)
2. Assessment	£1.0 (14%)	Median £2.5 (19%)
3. Interim & Temporary Accommodation	£1.4 (20%)	Median £3.5 (25%)
4. Allocations to Homeless	£0.26 (4%)	Median £0.5 (7%)

Chart 2a Temporary Accommodation (Homeless Households) reduction target and projections 2007-8 to 2008-9

	Apr-08	May-08	Jun-08	Jul-08	Aug-08	Sep-08	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08	Jan-09	Feb-09	Mar-09	Apr-09
Target (net reduction)	495	485	475	465	455	445	435	425	415	405	395	385	375
Performance	529	516	482	484	467	445	445	428	411	394	360	343	326
Stretch Target													

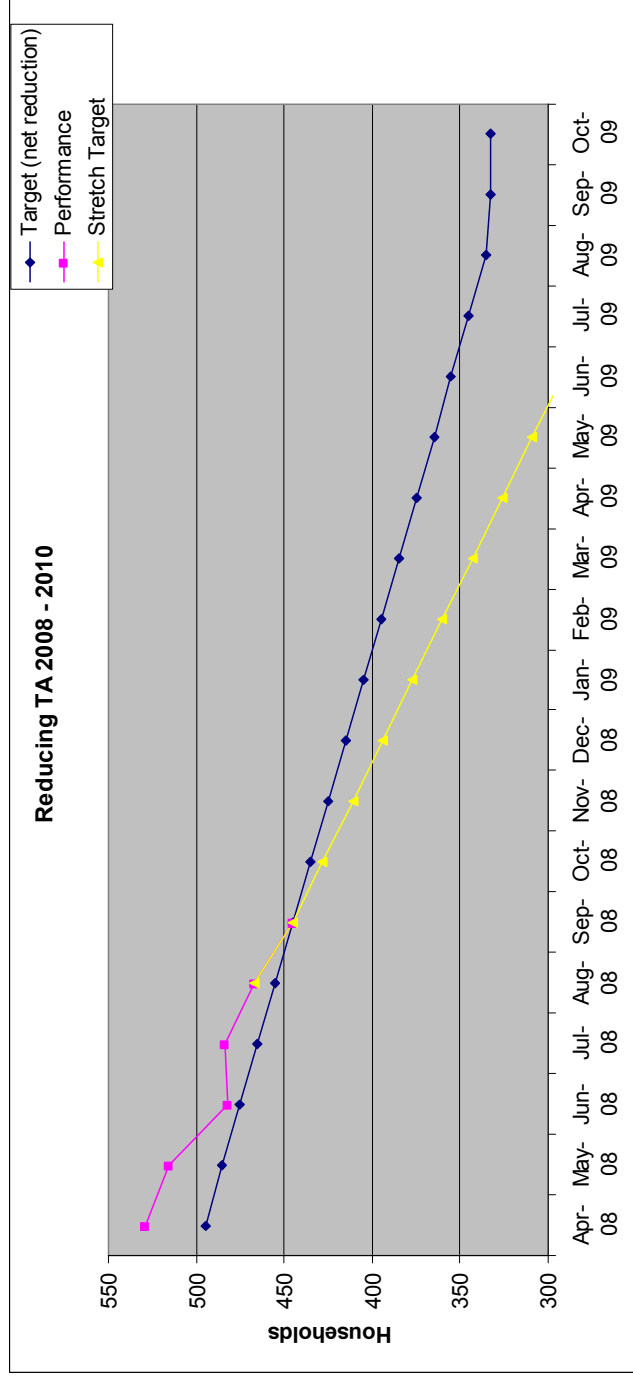


Table 3: Average management cost per unit (from Audit commission VfM profiles)

Authority name	2007
Southend on Sea Borough Council	29.50
Reading Borough Council	20.13
Brighton and Hove City Council	17.09
Bristol City Council	16.59
Blackpool Council	15.91
Southampton City Council	15.71
Bournemouth Borough Council	14.60
Portsmouth City Council	13.56
City of York Council	13.43
Plymouth City Council	13.39
North Tyneside Council	12.44

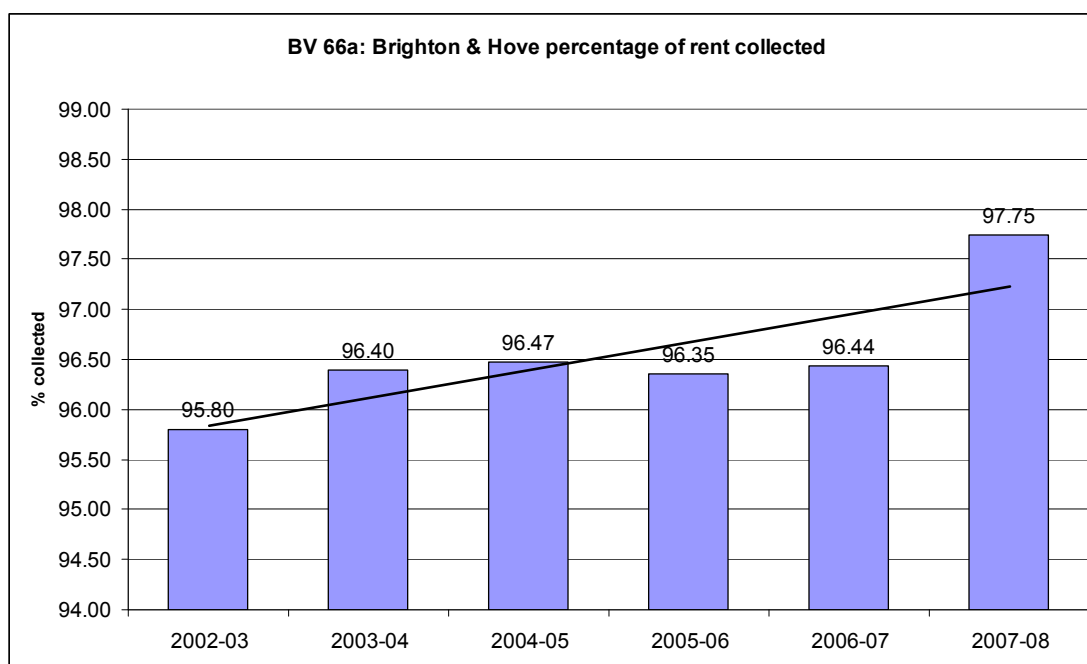
Chart 4

Table 5: Weekly maintenance £ per property (from Audit commission VfM profiles)

Authority name	2007
Portsmouth City Council	19.70
Brighton and Hove City Council	18.82
Blackpool Council	17.40
Southampton City Council	16.97
Plymouth City Council	16.74
Southend on Sea Borough Council	16.25
Reading Borough Council	16.24
Bristol City Council	15.07
North Tyneside Council	13.48
City of York Council	13.29
Bournemouth Borough Council	10.47

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 47

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Housing Management Performance Report
Date of Meeting: 4 November 2008
Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Housing
Contact Officer: Name: John Austin Locke Tel: 29-1008
E-mail: John.austin-locke@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with information on current performance within Housing Management services and on general policy initiatives underway to improve performance. The appendices to the report summarise the key performance results for the first financial quarter of 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee comment on the contents of this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

3.1 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

- 3.1.1 This section of the report provides information pertaining to four statutory performance indicators relating to the collection of Housing Revenue Account rent.

BVPI 66a. Proportion of rent arrears collected

BVPI 66a	
Brighton & Hove	97.96% (1st Quarter 2008/09)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	98.56% (annual return 2006/7)*
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	96.88% (annual return 2006/7)
Unitaries – Average	97.74% (annual return 2006/7)

* N.B The benchmarking information is taken from national reported figures from 2006/07. Benchmarking information for 2007/08 is not published by the Audit Commission until autumn 2008.

3.1.2 This performance indicator relates to the proportion of rent collected as a percentage of the total rent due during the year. It does not take account of any cash collected to clear arrears from previous arrears or pre-payments taken to cover rent due in future years. This means that it is not possible for the result to exceed 100%.

3.1.3 The table below shows current performance for each neighbourhood area. The performance for the same period for 2007/08 is also shown as a comparator. All neighbourhood areas have improved on last years result for the same period.

Neighbourhood	Performance 2007/08	Performance 2008/09	Difference Between 2007/08 and 2008/09
Brighton East	95.90%	97.38%	+1.48%
Central	97.35%	98.37%	+1.02%
North & East	97.40%	98.28%	+0.88%
West	96.35%	98.16%	+1.81%
Temporary Accommodation	94.87%	95.40%	+0.72%
Citywide	96.68%	97.96%	+1.28%

3.1.4 The table below shows what the percentages translate to in financial terms. Based on current performance it is forecast that the council will collect £39.28 million of the total collectable rent during the year that became due during the year.

Neighbourhood	Annual Rent Charged to Tenants (£)	Performance to the end of June 2008	How much of the rent charged for the year that we collected (£)
Brighton East	12,807,349	97.38%	12,471,796
Central	7,756,829	98.37%	7,630,393
North & East	11,471,758	98.28%	11,274,443
West	7,794,197	98.16%	7,650,784
Temporary Accommodation	267,214	95.40%	254,922
Totals	40,097,347	97.96%	39,282,338

3.1.5 At the beginning of April 2008 current arrears stood at £848,558 and at the end of June had reduced to £774,621 representing a drop of £73,937.

3.1.6 **BVPI 66b. % of tenants with more than seven weeks arrears**

BVPI 66b	
Brighton & Hove	6.62% (1st Quarter 2008/09)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	4.64% (annual return 2006/7)
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	8.40% (annual return 2006/7)
Unitaries – Average	6.94% (annual return 2006/7)

3.1.7 This indicator shows the percentage of tenants with more than seven weeks' arrears. The indicator is an average over the year rather than a snap shot at anyone time i.e. the end of a month or quarter. This means that the figures shown are cumulative and we take weekly snapshots to calculate average to date.

3.1.8 For 2008/09 we have set a target of no more than 7.60% of tenants having more than seven weeks' arrears. At the end of the first quarter performance stood at 6.62%, or an average of 783 debtors with arrears of more than 7 weeks. During this period the number of tenants with more than 7 weeks arrears has dropped by 69. At the time of writing this report the target is being reviewed so that it remains stretching for the team.

3.1.9 **BVPI 66c. Tenants who have received a NOSP for rent arrears.**

BVPI 66c	
Brighton & Hove	7.52% (1st Quarter 2008/09)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	17.01% (annual return 2006/7)
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	33.35% (annual return 2006/7)
Unitaries – Average	25.36% (annual return 2006/7)

3.1.10 This indicator measures the percentage of local authority tenants who have had a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) served on them for rent arrears. A NOSP is the first stage of legal action against tenants and gives notice that unless a tenant takes steps to address their arrears or enter into an agreement with the council to repay the debt then the council may proceed to court action.

3.1.11 The government is very clear that local authorities must adopt a preventative approach to rent arrears. The aim of this indicator is to ensure local authorities are only using legal action and threats of legal action as a last resort. The government expect local authorities to review policies and procedures to ensure that preventative measures are in place so that Notices of Seeking Possession are kept to a minimum.

3.1.12 Brighton and Hove's arrears procedures follow the Court Service pre-action protocol to ensure that officers do not pursue inappropriate court action. Tenants are provided with every opportunity to enter into a repayment agreement and engage support services, where necessary.

3.1.13 It is disappointing that we are well outside our target, however, members of the Consultative Committee are asked to recognise the achievement for BVPI66a, which is the actual income that feeds into the Housing Revenue Account. It is not considered sensible, given our collection rate to keep BVPI66c artificially low (i.e. by not serving NOSP's) at the expense of BVPI66a.

3.1.14 BVPI 66d. Tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears

BVPI 66d	
Brighton & Hove	0.04% (1 st Quarter 2008/09)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	0.23%
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	0.5%
Unitaries – Average	0.39%

3.1.15 This indicator measures the percentage of all tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears. The denominator in this calculation looks at the number of tenancies at the end of each quarter.

3.1.16 During the first quarter of 2008/09 Brighton & Hove Council evicted 5 households for rent arrears.

3.2 Empty Property Turnaround Time

3.2.1 This section of the report provides performance information for BV212, the Best Value Performance Indicator for the letting of empty homes for the first quarter of the financial year 2008/09, and up to August this year.

BV212 Average time taken to re-let local authority housing	
Brighton	31 (Apr – Sep 2008/9)
All England – Top Quartile*	26 (annual return 2006/7)
All England – Bottom Quartile	46 (annual return 2006/7)
All England – Average	39 (annual return 2006/7)
Unitaries – Top Quartile	28 (annual return 2006/7)
Unitaries – Bottom Quartile	45 (annual return 2006/7)
Unitaries – Average	39 (annual return 2006/7)

3.2.2 The table below show the monthly performance on empty properties.

2008/09 Target: 28 days	Year end total	April	May	June	July	Aug	Year to date
Average turnaround time	31	30	34	30	24	30	31
Lets within target	60%	67%	72%	60%	80%	69%	69%

3.2.3 The table below gives a breakdown showing performance in the constituent types of properties.

Table 2 BV212 Average turnaround time in days - 2007/8						
Target: 30 days	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Year to date
General needs housing						
General needs	24	26	25	22	26	25
Total let	55	53	63	50	45	267
% Let in target	75%	77%	70%	82%	73%	75%
Sheltered housing						
Sheltered	35	59	48	25	34	41
Total let	14	9	11	6	12	52
% Let in target	57%	67%	45%	83%	58%	60%
Total for Housing Management						
Housing Mgmt	26	31	28	23	28	27
Total let	69	62	74	56	57	319
% Let in target	71%	76%	66%	82%	70%	73%
Temporary Accommodation (TACC)						
TACC	48	46	40	31	39	47
Total let	14	18	19	8	11	68
% Let in target	47%	59%	35%	63%	64%	51%
All properties						
All	30	34	30	24	30	31
Total let	83	80	93	64	68	387
% Let in target	67%	72%	60%	80%	69%	69%

3.2.4 From April to the end of August there had been a total of 278 refusals amongst the 319 properties let. There are around thirty different refusal reasons, but the top five are listed in the box below.

3.2.5 Reasons for refusing property offers.

Reason	Numbers	Percentages
Did not respond to offer	31	18%
Changed area of choice/wants a different area	44	16%
Not suitable for applicant	35	13%
Wants a different property	32	12%
Didn't like the property	19	7%

3.2.6 The Lettings Team continue to be concerned that a significant number of applicants are not responding to offers, and are currently trialing sending text messages to applicants the day before the appointment as a reminder.

3.3 Repairs and Maintenance Performance

3.3.1 The table below shows the percentage of responsive repairs completed within target time. The columns show overall performance for last year, the performance target for each repair priority, as well as the overall performance and the performance achieved by each repairs constructor.

Priority of Repair	Last Year 2007 / 2008	Target 2008 / 2009	Q1 Total Apr – Jun 08	Q1 Mears Apr – Jun 08	Q1 Kier Apr – Jun 08
Emergency Repairs Completed in time	88.36 %	97 %	95.45 %	94.83 %	96.21 %
No of Emergency Repairs completed	8,299	N/A	2,020	1,122	898
Urgent Repairs Completed in time	87.40 %	96 %	90.14 %	93.42 %	85.91 %
No of Urgent Repairs completed	8,938	N/A	1,806	1,018	788
Routine Repairs Completed within target time	88.63 %	95 %	91.05 %	94.50 %	86.27 %
No of Routine Repairs completed	13,892	N/A	4,259	2474	1785

- 3.3.2 Whilst performance for quarter one is better than that achieved last year, it remains below target in each priority of repair. To address these issues and improve performance a number of measures have been implemented, such as weekly monitoring by the management group of key indicators such as jobs completed within target time and the number of outstanding repairs. This work has delivered improvements in the number of jobs over target which has reduced from 2,800 orders in the middle of last year to a current level of 325 orders. Repairs & Maintenance has a target of achieving less than 200 overdue orders by the end of 2008.
- 3.3.3 Extra schedule of rates codes have been introduced to reduce the level of emergency orders raised which will allow the constructors to better plan their work and complete it on time. Work is underway with our constructors to ensure that diagnosis and specification of repairs are enhanced and that the level of repairs completed in one visit continues to improve.
- 3.3.4 A surveyor appointment system has recently been introduced and has received some very positive feedback from tenants about the improvement in the service. Non-urgent repairs are currently being completed in an average of 13 days, which is just outside the Major Cities top quartile target of 12½ days.

3.3.5 Decent Homes / Energy Efficiency

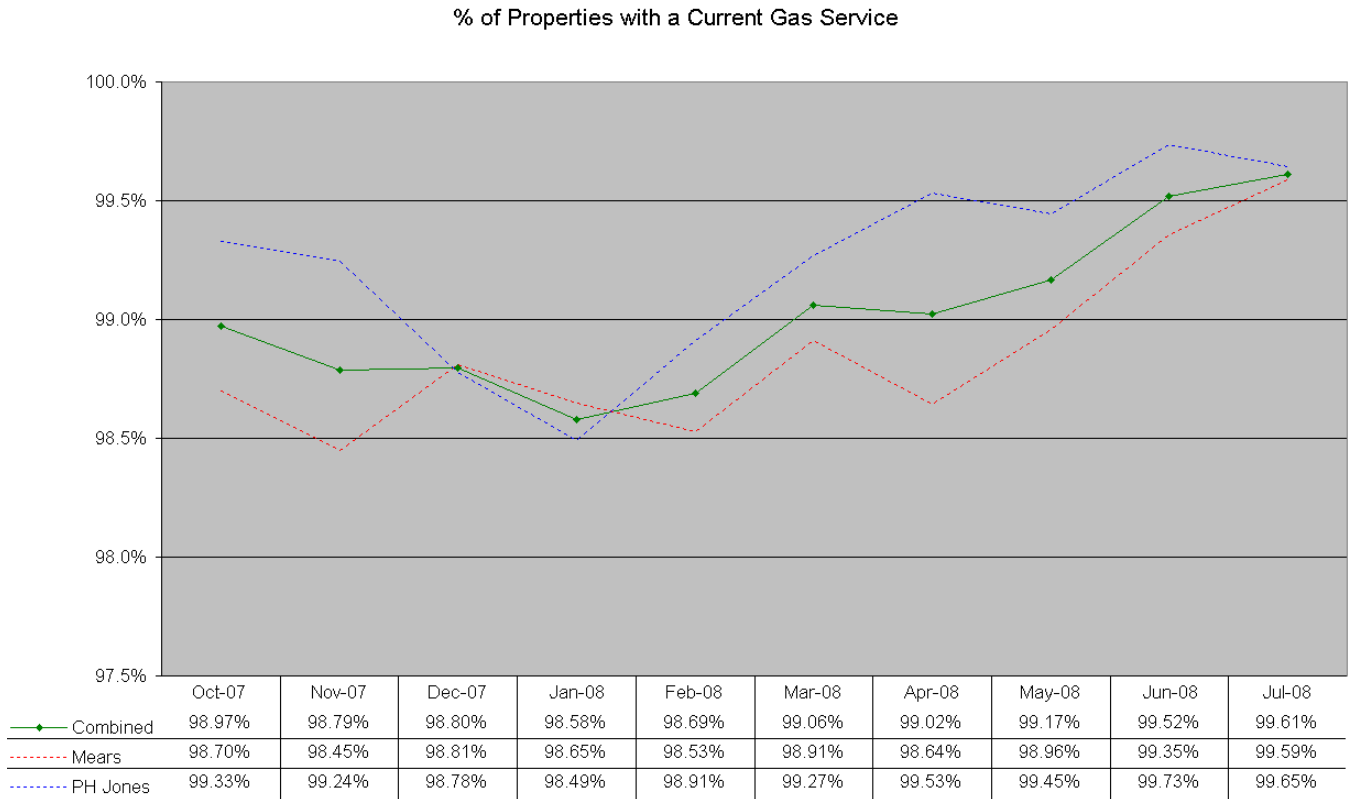
The table below shows performance for other areas of repairs and maintenance:

Performance Indicator	Last Year 2007 / 2008	Target 2008 / 2009	Q1 Total Apr – Jun 08
NI158 % of council homes that are non-decent	56.65 %	46 %	56.45 %
BV63 – Energy Efficiency (SAP Rating)	75.4	75.6	75.5

- 3.3.6 A number of projects focused on decent homes are commencing this year. These include large programmes to install new boilers and to replace kitchens and bathrooms in resident’s homes as well as the replacement of front doors.
- 3.3.7 Brighton & Hove City Council remains a strong performer on the energy efficiency of dwellings. Performance has again improved over the first quarter of 2008/2009 and remains in the top quartile for performance when compared to other authorities (top quartile for all authorities is 72, top quartile for unitary authorities is 75).

3.4 Gas Servicing

3.4.1 The graph below shows the progress of Brighton & Hove City Council, Mears and PH Jones in servicing gas installations. The last three months figures (May, June and July) have each been new highs. The current figure of 99.61% of properties having a current gas service is the highest achieved by BHCC and its partners to date.



3.4.2 The number of council properties with a valid gas safety certificate continues to improve. The end of quarter one figure of 99.52% (June 2008) is an improvement of 1.07% on the figure for the same time last year (98.45%, June 2007).

3.4.3 The trial of fixing awareness raising notices over tenants' door locks continues and appears to have had promising results. A meeting between the gas partners and council officers is due to take place shortly to discuss different ways to improve access. This will include the proposal to fit new boiler controls that incorporate a service reminder alarm and ways to advise repairs desk staff that the gas service is due when tenants phone to request other repairs.

3.4.4 Work on the gas safety action plan continues following the planned review by CORGI (the national watchdog for gas safety) in March. Currently policies and procedures for Gas Escapes are being reviewed. It is planned that CORGI will be asked to carry out a further review of the gas process in the next quarter.

3.5 Estates Service

3.5.1 The trial of dedicated cleaners for groups of buildings continues to be well received by residents. Cleaners who are working this way have also given positive feedback and have said that being in a fixed location allows them to feel more in control of the work that they are doing. This view is supported by a comparison of the completion figures for the blocks where dedicated cleaners have been introduced, before and after the trial started, with more tasks being completed since their introduction.

Estates Service Monitoring Figures					
Cleaning Performance April 08 – June 08					
	2007/8	April	May	June	
Cleaning Performance	87	83	92	93	
This data shows the cleaning performance percentage. This is defined as the cleaning tasks completed in the 4 week period as a percentage of the total number of jobs on the cleaning schedule that period.					

3.5.2 The Graffiti and Bulk Refuse teams continue to carry out a high number of jobs across the city. There was a drop in the number of jobs the bulk team completed within target during May and early June. This was due to their truck having mechanical problems. During this period, emergency jobs were given to a contractor.

3.5.3 Estates Service staff are currently discussing ways of taking joint action with City Clean’s Enforcement Officers to tackle fly tipping on housing land. This will involve enforcement training for housing staff, information sharing between the services and feeding back to local residents on the amount of tipping in their area, the cost of removal and advice on what to do if they see anyone fly tip.

Estates Service Monitoring Figures					
Bulk Waste Removal Feb 08 - June 08					
	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
Urgent jobs	6	8	3	5	2
Routine jobs	235	225	214	204	213
Total	241	233	217	209	215
Target met for urgent jobs	100%	100%	66%	40%	100%
Target met for routine jobs	100%	97%	96%	66%	82%
Target - urgent jobs removal in 1 working day of report					
Target - routine jobs removal within 7 working days of report					

Estates Service Monitoring Figures					
Graffiti Removal Feb 08 – June 08					
	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
Urgent jobs	0	0	0	1	1
Routine jobs	28	70	55	39	72
Total	28	70	55	40	73
Target met for urgent jobs	0% N/A	0% N/A	0%N/A	100%	100%
Target met for routine jobs	100%	97%	84%	92%	93%
Target - urgent jobs removal in 1 working day of report					
Target - routine jobs removal within 7 working days of report					

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Performance report will be presented to customers at the next round of Housing Management Area Panels.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Financial information on performance is included in the main body of the report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks 25 September 2008

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are none.

Lawyer consulted: Deborah Jones Date: 19 September 2008

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no direct Equalities Implications arising from this report

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct risk and opportunity management implications arising from this report

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct Corporate or Citywide implications arising from this report.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Alternative options are integral to the processes of performance improvement discussed in this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 These are contained within the body of the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Housing Management Performance Reports - Charts

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Housing Management Performance Report - charts

4 November 2008

Contents

NI 158 % of non-decent council homes (formerly BV184a)	3
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (Citywide)	4
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (North)	5
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (West)	6
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (Central)	7
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (East)	8
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (temporary accommodation)	9
BV 66b - % of tenants with more than 7 weeks' rent arrears	10
BV 66c - % of tenants in arrears who have had notices seeking possession served	11
BV 212 - Average time in days to relet local authority housing	12
% of properties with a current gas safety certificate (Citywide)	13

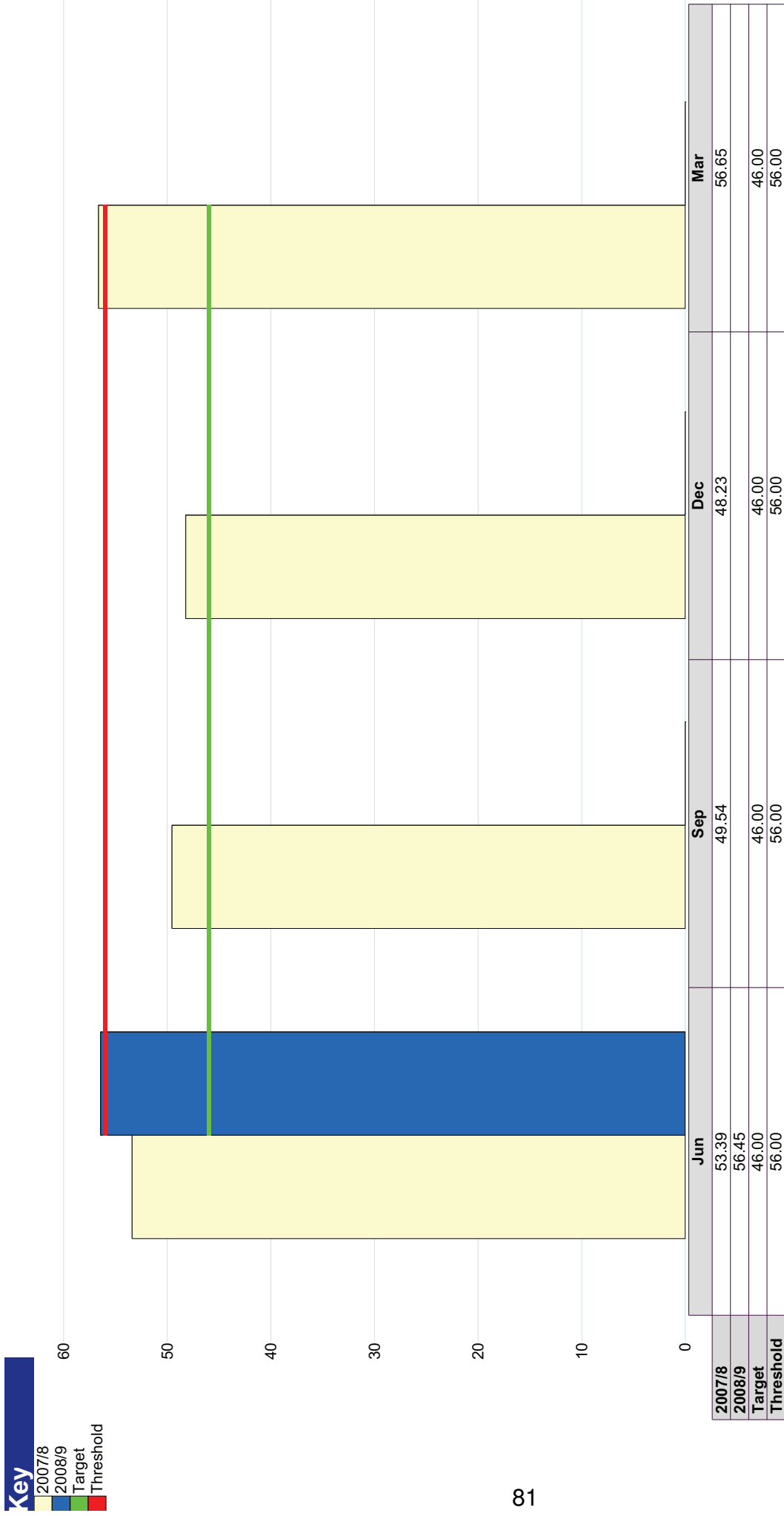
Key to Graphs

The graphs shown on pages 3- 13 display the council's performance against the indicators listed above. The green line on the graphs represents the target we aim to achieve, which is set each year in agreement between service managers, directors and elected members.

The red line denotes a "threshold" level of performance, which represents a significant variation from target and means action needs to be taken to bring about improvement. This level is set in agreement between service managers and the corporate performance team.

The yellow bars show monthly performance during the financial year of 2007/08, and the blue bars show performance during each month of 2008/09.

NI 158 % of non-decent council homes (formerly BV184a)

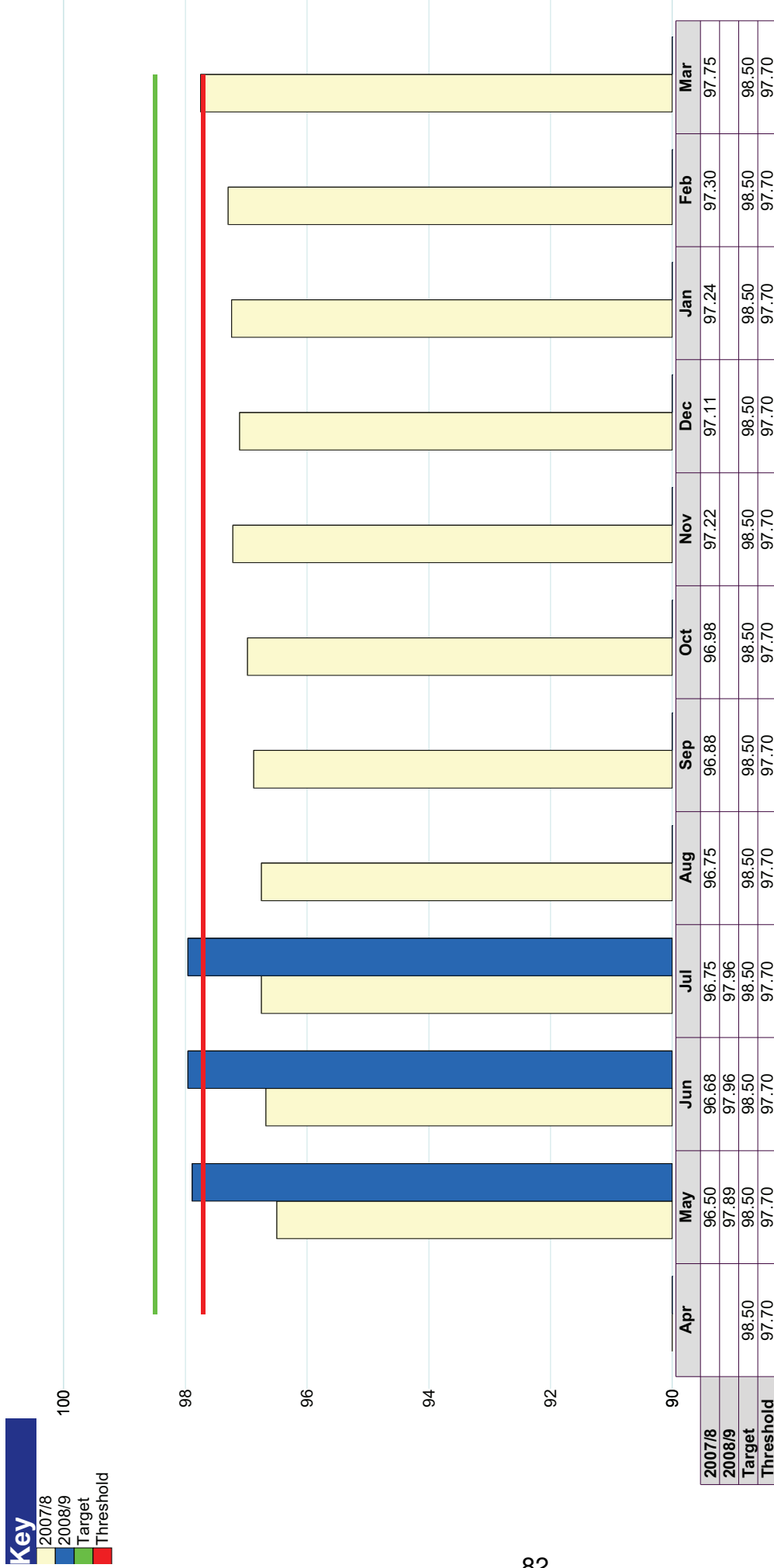


Comments

This indicator is part of Brighton & Hove's Local Area Agreement to ensure more homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. Actions to reach the target of 46% non-decent council homes in 2008/09 include:

- Ensure tenants and leaseholders are at the heart of the decision-making process on all maintenance and improvement works to the stock
- Prioritise the capital works programme over 30 years to meet, as far as possible, Decent Homes Standard
- Reduce unit repair and planned maintenance costs and consultancy fees, saving an estimated £156 million over 30 years
- Improve the ratio between capital works and responsive repairs

BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (Citywide)



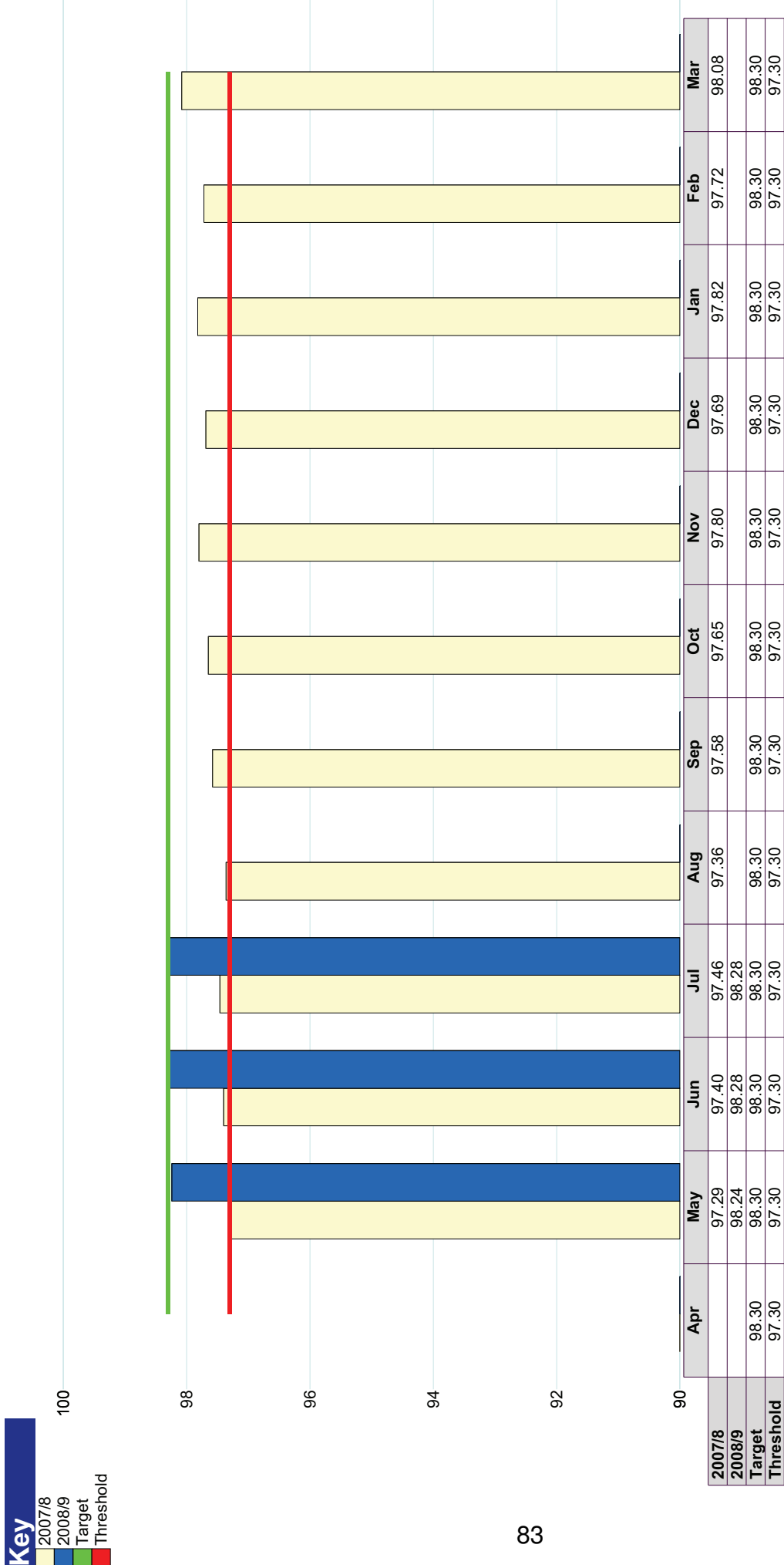
Comment

This indicator measures the rent collected by the Authority as a proportion of the rents owed on local authority-owned dwellings across the city.

Citywide, the total rent due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 will be £40.78m. The council's target is to collect 98.5% of this amount over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph).

See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

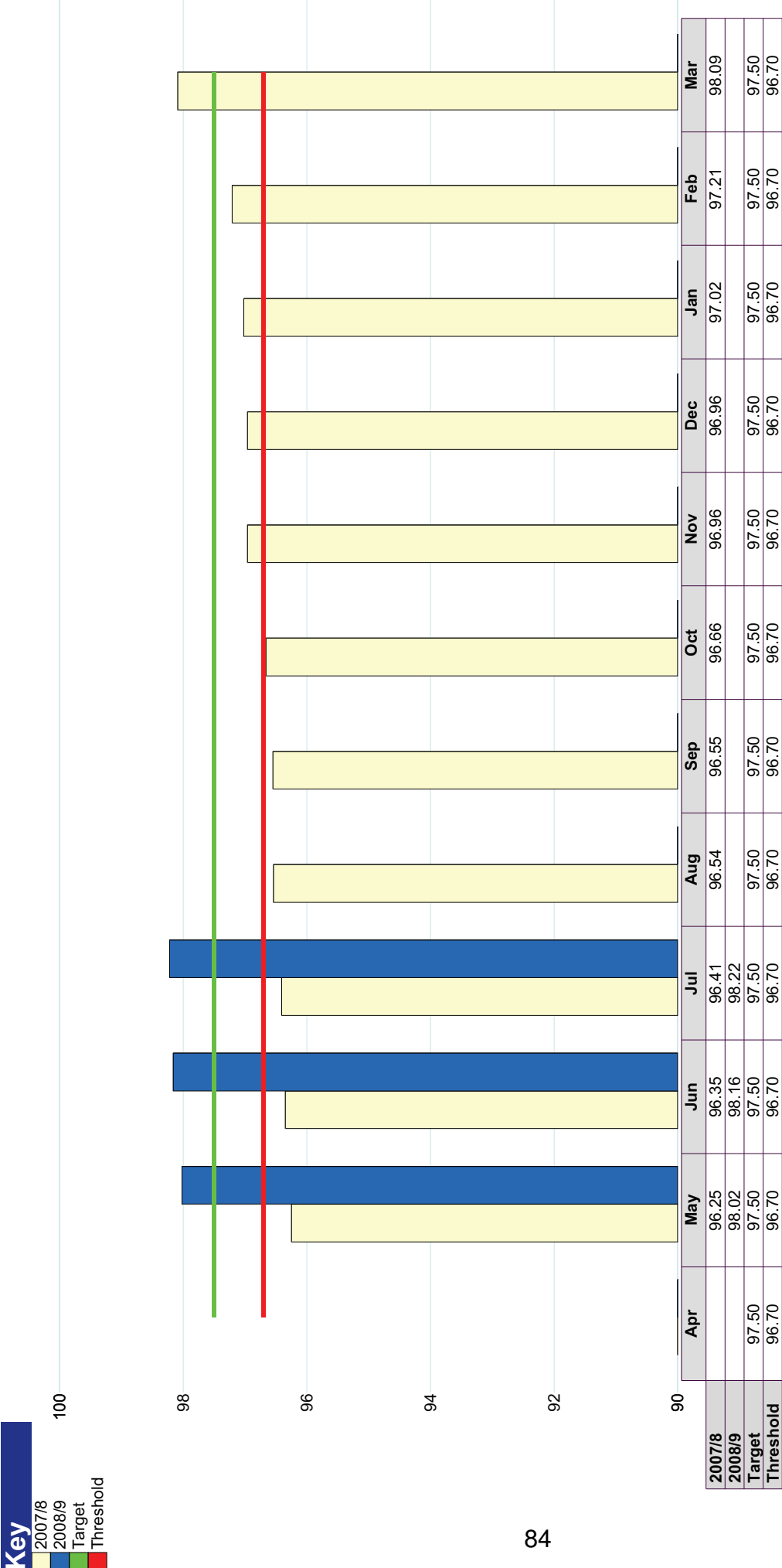
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (North)



Comment

In the North region of the city, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £11.6m. The council's target is to collect 98.3% of this amount in this region over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph). See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

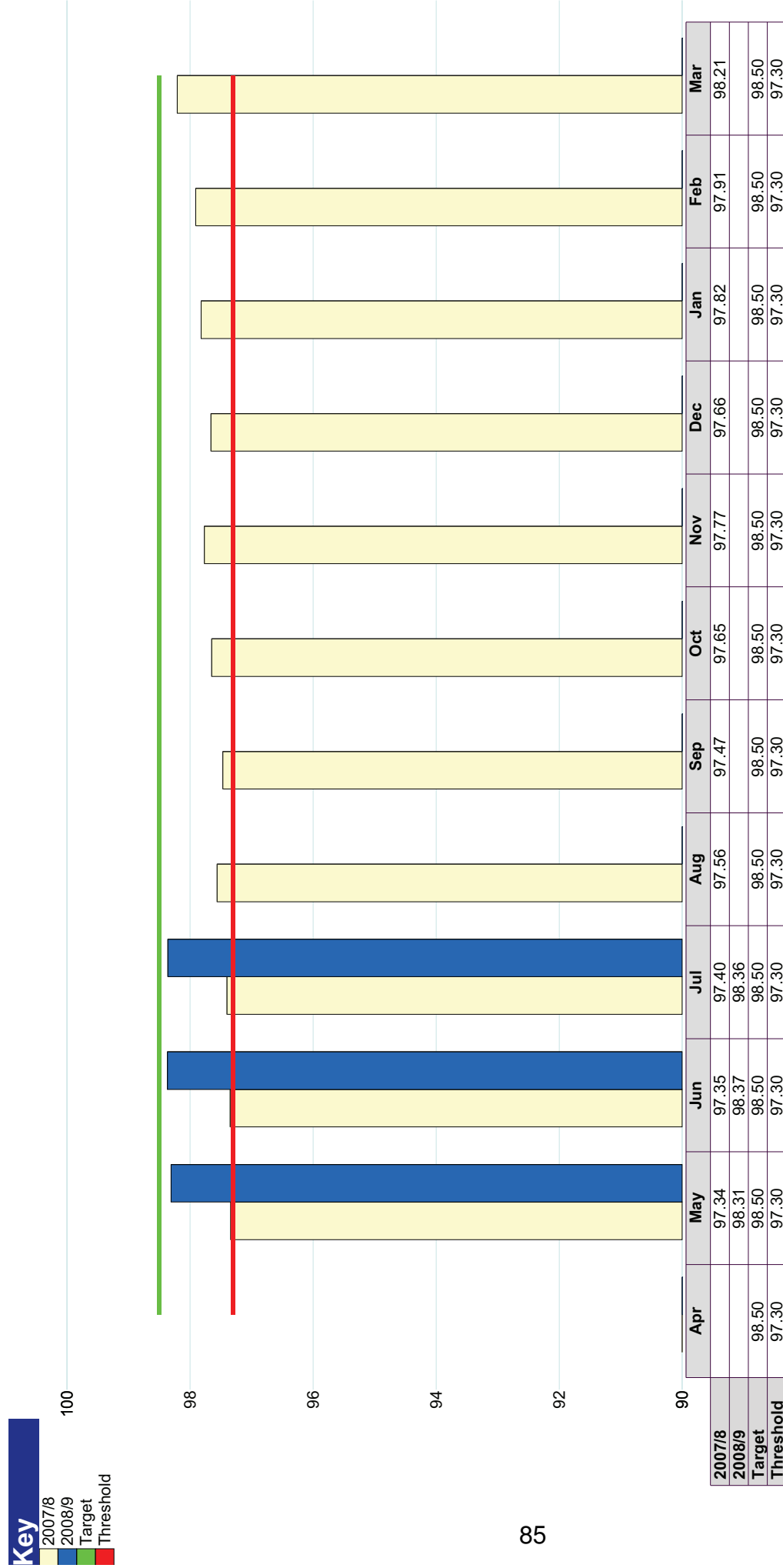
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (West)



Comment

In the West region of the city, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £7.9m. The council's target is to collect 97.5% of this amount in this region over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph). See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

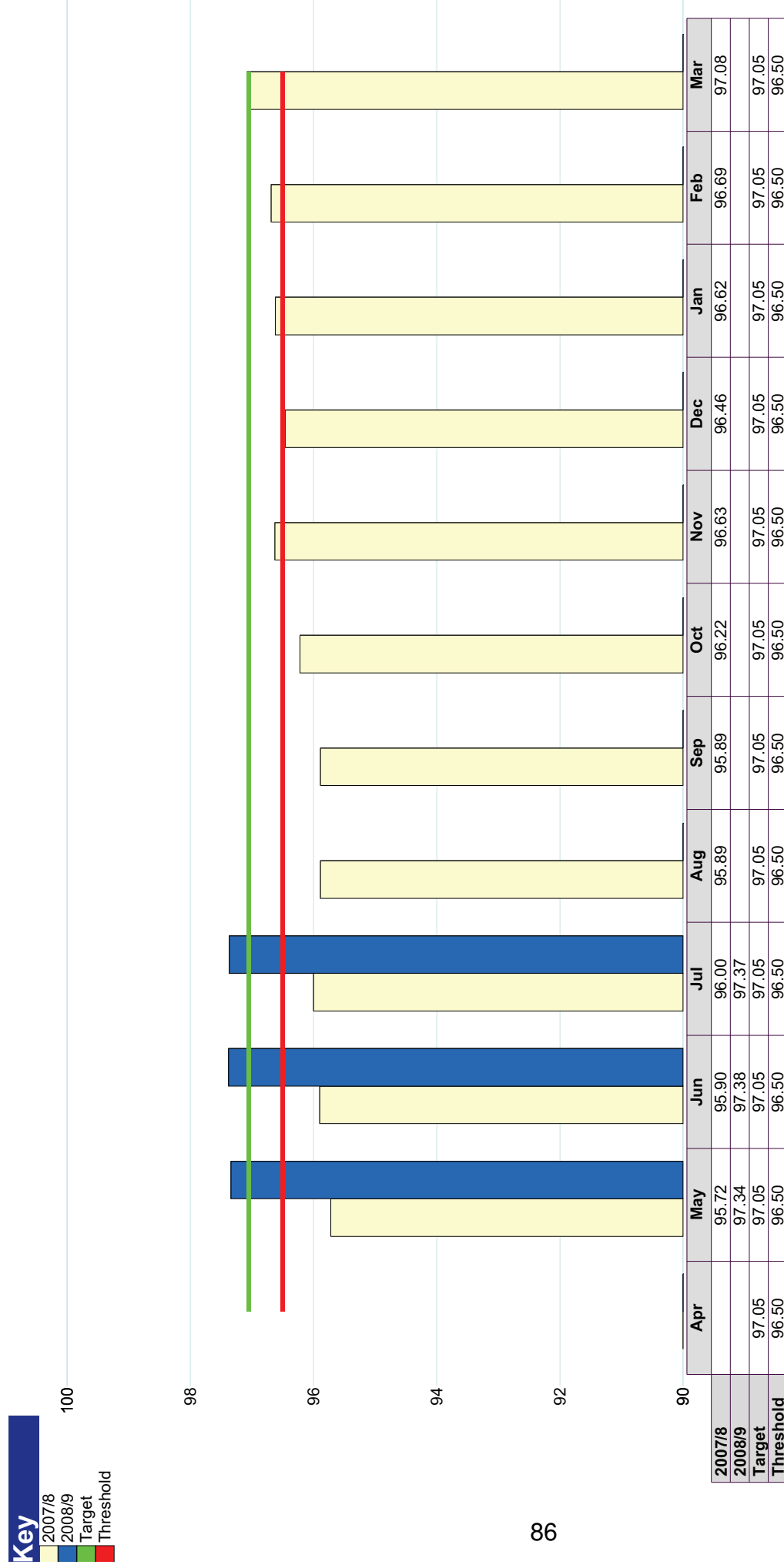
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (Central)



Comment

In the Central region of the city, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £7.8m. The council's target is to collect 98.5% of this amount in this region over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph). See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (East)



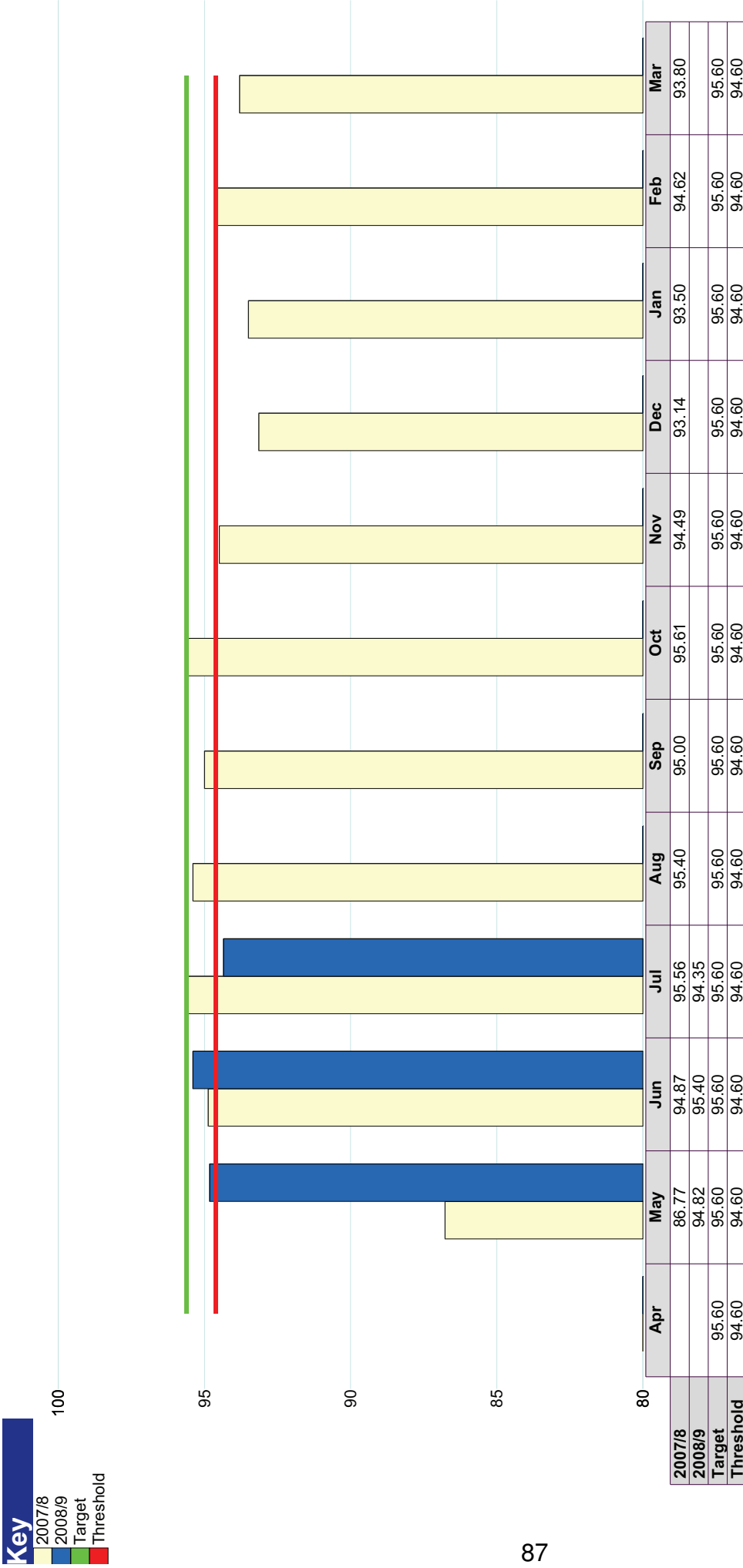
Comment

In the East region of the city, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £12.9m.

The council's target is to collect 97.05% of this amount in this region over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph).

See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

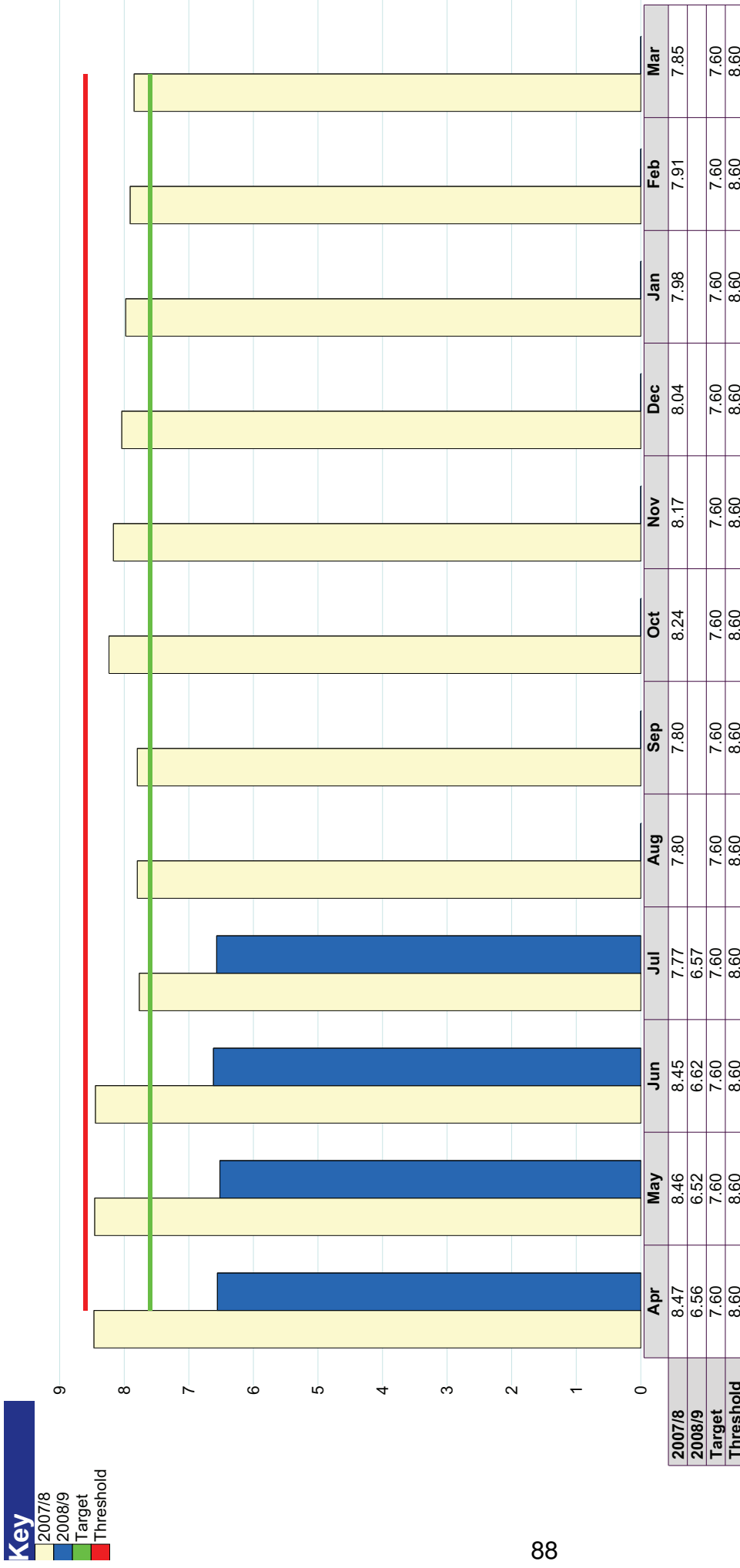
BV 66a - Proportion of rent collected (temporary accommodation)



Comment

For temporary accommodation, the total rent and arrears due to the council after empty properties are taken into account in 2008/09 is approximately £391,000. The council's target is to collect 95.6% of this amount from temporary accommodation over the course of the year (as represented by the green line on the graph). See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

BV 66b - % of tenants with more than 7 weeks' rent arrears



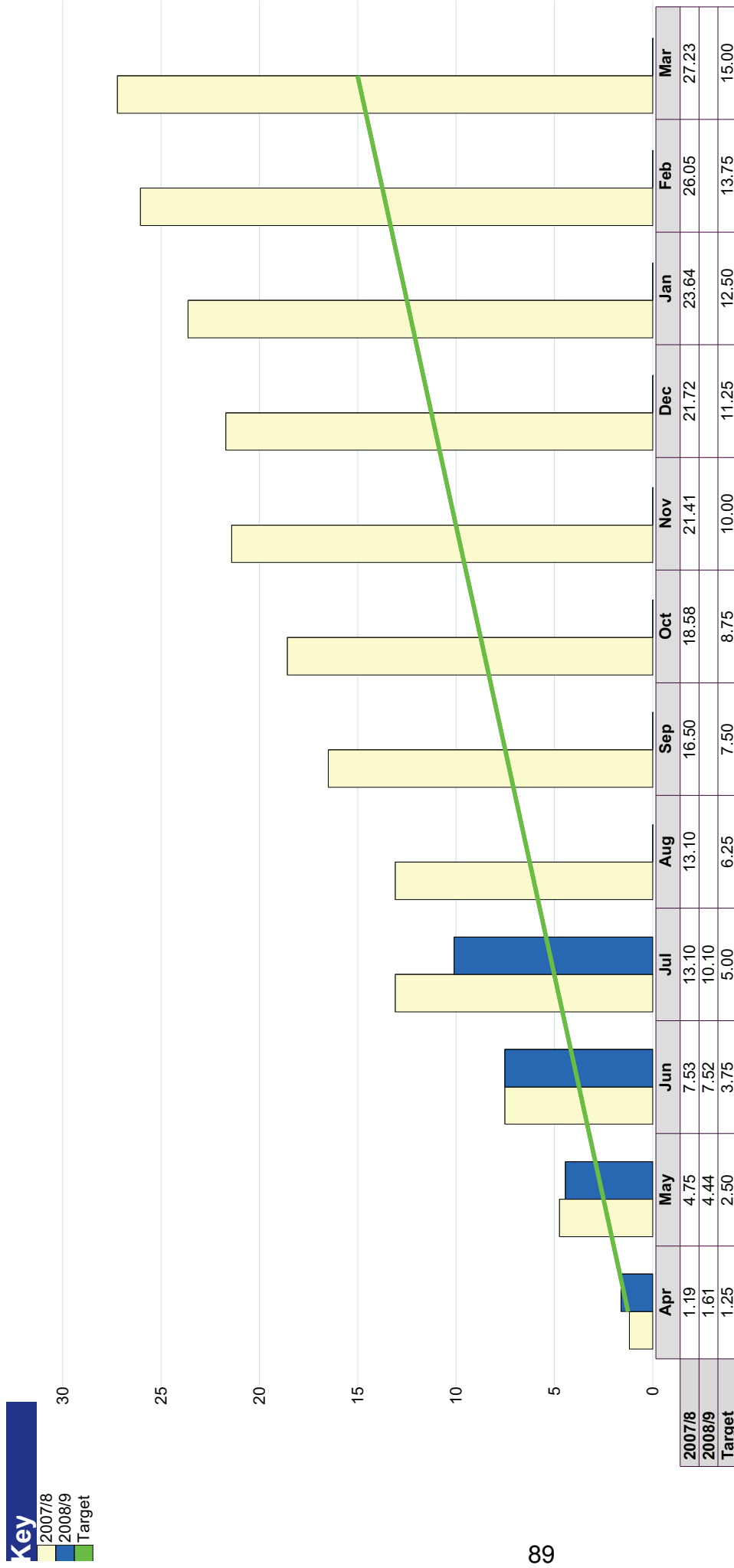
Comments

This indicator measures the number of tenants with 7 weeks or more gross rent arrears as a percentage of the total number of tenants.

In Brighton & Hove, there are roughly 12,200 tenants, of which around 800 (6.6%) are in more than 7 weeks gross rent arrears.

See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

BV 66c - % of tenants in arrears who have had notices seeking possession served

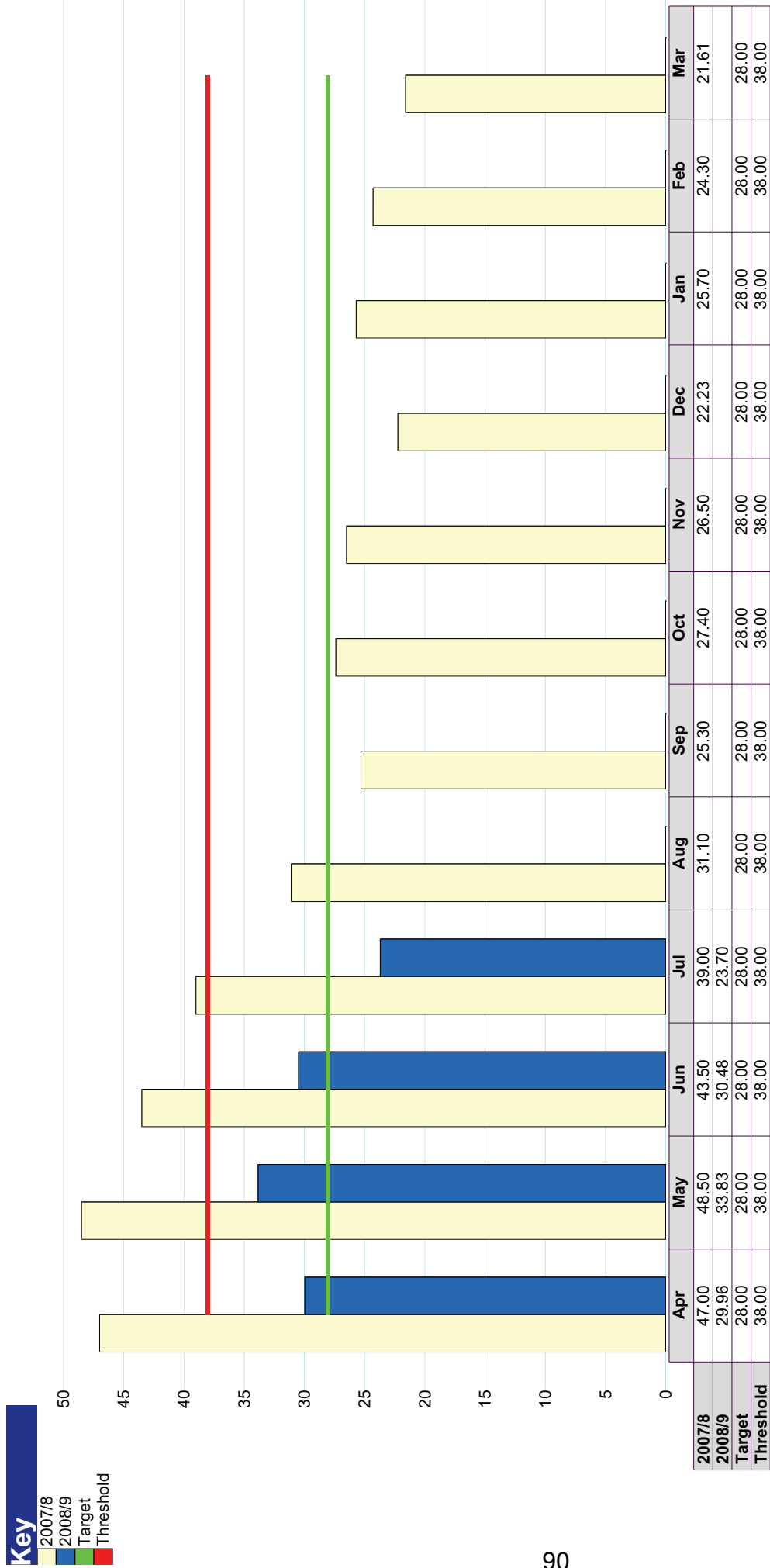


Comments

This indicator measures the number of tenants who have had notice seeking possession served as a result of being in arrears as a percentage of the total number of tenants who are in arrears. Notices seeking possession are served as necessary throughout the year, so the number the council serves increases as the year progresses from April to March. Over the course of the year, the council aims to serve notices seeking possession to no more than 15% of tenants in arrears (as indicated by the green line).

See the "Rent Collection and Arrears" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

BV 212 - Average time in days to relet local authority housing



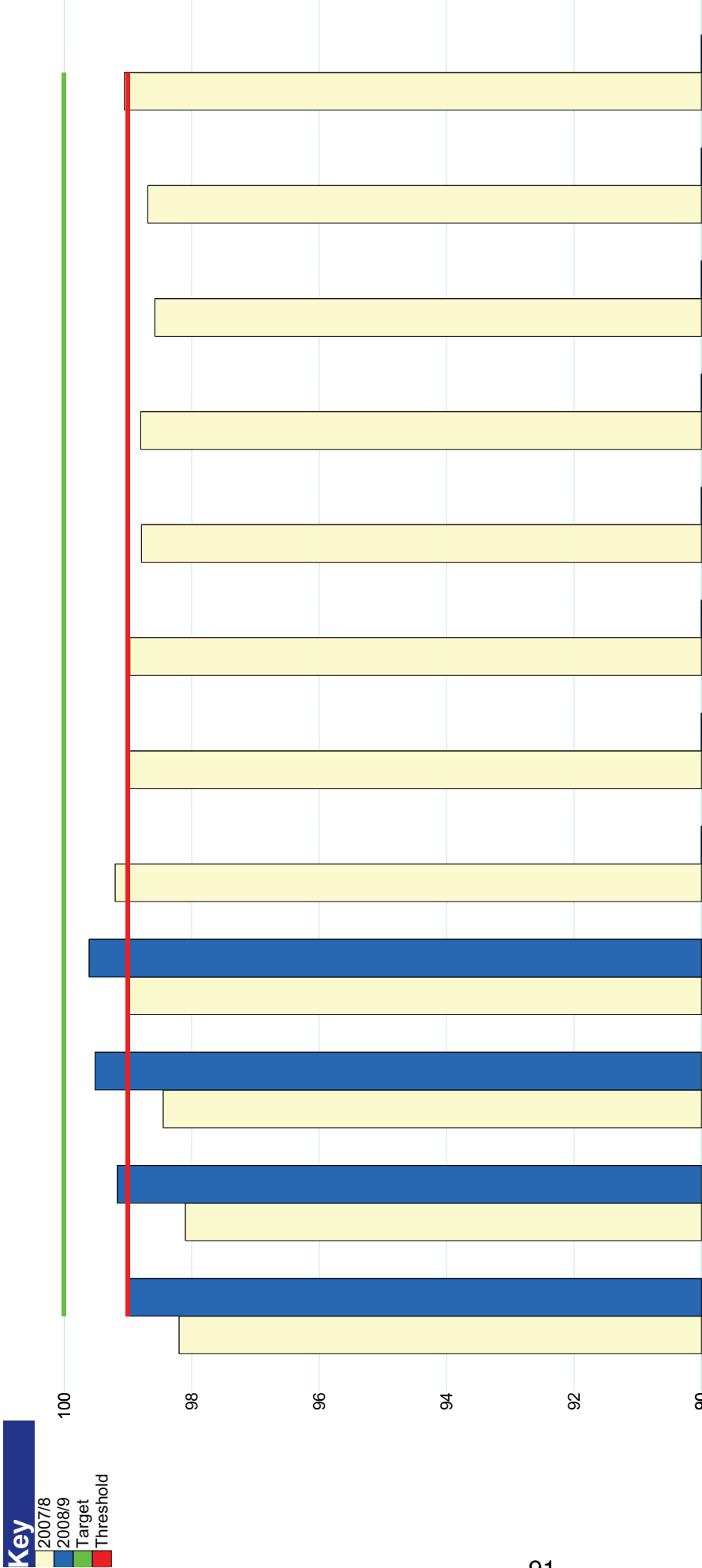
Comments

This indicator measures the average number of days to relet local authority homes once they have become vacant. This includes supported and sheltered accommodation, but excludes properties undergoing major repairs.

The council aims to achieve an average relet time of 28 days or less (as represented by the green line on the graph).

See the "Empty Property Turnaround Time" section of the accompanying report for further information on work contributing to performance against this indicator.

% of properties with a current gas safety certificate (Citywide)



	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2007/8	99.02	99.17	99.52	99.61	99.20	99.03	98.97	98.79	98.80	98.58	98.69	99.06
2008/9	98.20	98.10	98.45	99.03	99.20	99.03	98.97	98.79	98.80	98.58	98.69	99.06
Target	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Threshold	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00	99.00

Comments

This indicator measures the percentage of local authority homes with gas pipework or equipment for which there is a current gas safety certificate. The council aims to ensure that all relevant properties have up to date gas safety certificates. There are approximately 10,600 such properties in Brighton & Hove.

