

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 56

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing Management Performance Report (Quarter 2)		
Date of Meeting:	7 December 2009		
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care & Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	John Austin Locke	Tel: 29-1008
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This is the Quarter two report for Housing Management Performance for the year 2009-2010.
- 1.2 This report continues the new style of presentation and comparative benchmarking outlined in the end of year and quarter one reports presented previously to Housing management Consultative Committee

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1.0 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

Indicator	End of Year Performance 08/09	First Quarter 09/10	Second Quarter 09/10	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures 2 nd Quarter	Future Targets	
					09/10	10/11
BV66a Rent Collection	98.16%	98.16%	98.27%	Definition under review with Housemark	98.50%	98.68%
BV66a Rent Collection (Central housing area)	98.35%	98.43%	98.42%	n.a.	98.79%	99.03%
BV66a Rent Collection (East housing area)	97.73%	97.78%	97.97%	n.a.	97.99%	98.13%
BV66a Rent Collection (North housing area)	98.35%	98.30%	98.35%	n.a.	98.66%	98.82%
BV66a Rent Collection (west housing area)	98.43%	98.36%	98.52%	n.a.	98.88%	99.12%
BV66a Rent Collection (Temporary Acc.)	97.07%	97.10%	97.61%	n.a.	96.95%	96.95%
BV66b Those with arrears of more than 7 weeks	6.40%	5.64%	5.51%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 4.34%	4.96%	4.13%
BV66c The NOSP figure	30.35%	5.82%	12.31%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 10.60%	26.46%	23.80%
BV66d The Eviction Figure (% tenants evicted for rent arrears)	0.16%	0.02%	0.06%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 0.06%	< than 35 evictions per annum: 0.29%	

Indicator	End of Year Performance 08/09	First Quarter 09/10	Second Quarter 09/10	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures 2 nd Quarter	Future Targets	
					09/10	10/11
BV69 % rent lost due to vacant dwellings	1.33%	1.10%	1.93%	1.49%	To be set	
Total former tenant arrears (Inclusive of Temporary Accommodation)	£784,753 (£972,732k)	£812,001 (£1,002,339)	£819,524 £1,011,396	n.a.	To be set	
% Collection rate for former tenant arrears	28.70	4.57	10.24%	RIEN	To be set	
% of Write Offs for former tenant arrears	18.66%	0.04%	1.56%	n.a.	To be set	
Total recharge debt	£95,884	£97,345	£125,752	n.a.	£125,484	
% collection rate for recharges	31.26%	6.68%	9.32%	n.a.	35%	
% Leaseholder recovery rate	80%	63%	67%	n.a.	82%	To be set
% Leaseholder Recovery Rate on Recoverable arrears	90%	Not collected quarterly yet	n.a.	n.a.	90%	To be set

3.1.1 The collection rate forecast at the end of the September 09 was 98.27%. Performance has continued to improve despite the economic climate. This is primarily due to the effectiveness of the financial inclusion initiatives and the consistent approach to income collection and arrears adopted by the Housing Income Management Team. While continuous improvement will undoubtedly become increasingly difficult in the coming months we are confident that we will achieve a top quartile result.

3.1.2 The percentage of debtors with more than seven weeks rent arrears at the end of September 09 was 5.51%. This represents a reduction of 223 in the number of debtors since the end of the 2nd Quarter 08/09.

3.1.3 Between April and September 09 the number of tenants served with a Notice of Seeking Possession (Nosp) was 354 compared to 482 during the same period in 08/09.

3.1.4 The number of households evicted for rent arrears at the end of the 2nd Quarter 09/10 was 7. The same number of evictions were carried out between April and September 08.

3.1.5 The increase of £35k increase in former arrears since the end of March 09 is due primarily to former tenants with debt who have been rehoused by the council. However, a collection rate of 10.24% at the end of the 2nd Quarter 09/10 is encouraging.

3.2.0 Recharges

3.2.1 Following the recharge relaunch at the Housing Management staff conferences in July 09 both the quantity and quality of recharge referrals has improved, resulting in an increase in the total recharge debt.

3.3.0 Leaseholders' service charges - % collection rate on gross debt

3.3.1 The collection rate based on gross debt includes all historic debt and all charges raised in the current year. The gross debt can include amounts billed but not yet due, and debts where formal payment arrangements have been agreed. Analysis of the Q2 figures shows a sizeable reduction in the gross arrears figure against the same point last year, and year on year improvement in the collection rate for the same point. The collection rate for Q2 in 2007 was 52%, 2008 was 58% and this year is 67%.

3.3.2 For analysis of leaseholders' service charge arrears it is important to note that invoices are raised for actual expenditure at the end of Q2 (on 30 September) each year, and include the raising of invoices for major works at that point.

3.4.0 Leaseholders' service charges - % collection rate on recoverable arrears

3.4.1 Basing a collection rate on 'recoverable arrears' seeks to omit debts where payment arrangements or charging orders have been made, along with those that are formally in dispute, or where legal recovery action is being taken. This is currently only reported annually, although we are working on a method to try to enable reporting quarterly.

3.5.0 Empty Property Turnaround Time

Indicator	End of Year Performance 08/09	First Quarter 09/10	Second Quarter 09/10	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures 2 nd Quarter	Future Targets	
					09/10	10/11
BV212 average re-let times in days (all properties)	28	29	26	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 29.02 Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 25.25	26	24
General needs	25	26	22	n.a.	26	24
Sheltered	38	42	54	n.a.	26	24

3.5.1 The Lettings Team have a challenging target to achieve an average turnaround time of 26 days. Midway through the year the cumulative performance has not yet met the target, standing at 27.7 days from April to September, however we are pleased to report that stand alone figures for general needs properties for this quarter show an improvement over the previous quarter performance and hit the target.

3.5.2 The Lettings Team is continuously looking at ways in which customer service, as well as performance, can be improved - and will be spending some time in the coming months talking with recent customers to learn from their experience of the service. There will also be closer working with colleagues in sheltered housing to look at how we can reduce the numbers of people turning down sheltered properties when they attend viewings.

3.5.3 While our current performance brings us within the top quartile of major city authorities, we continue to seek service improvements through benchmarking with, and learning from, other social landlords.

3.5.4 We are concerned with our performance on letting sheltered properties and have looked into the factors underlying this.

3.5.5 Certain schemes remain harder to let and attract few bids, examples are:

- Schemes with shared bathroom facilities for example; Evelyn Court in Portslade. A vacancy in Hazelholt, also in Portslade, only attracted five bids, and had to be re-advertised before it was finally let.

- Schemes on the outskirts of the city, for example; during the first two quarters of this year Jubilee Court in Moulsecoomb, which only has 4 out of 28 flats with shared bathroom facilities, had an average turnaround time of 99 days. In the same period Walter May House in Whitehawk, which is fully self-contained, had an average turnaround time of 50 days. In comparison Leach Court, which is centrally located, had an average turnaround time of 32 days.
- Jasmine Court has seven stairs to the main entrance and has no lift took 63 days to let. A further example is Woods House that has approximately 30 stairs to some flats.

3.5.6 While some schemes might be popular for particular reasons, such as a central location for example; Somerset Point, some people have turned down offers there because it is a high rise block, or the flat being viewed was too small. There are also some popular schemes in which offers of studio flats such as Muriel House where a studio flat was turned down seven times before being let.

3.5.7 There has been an increase in instances where bids are made on behalf of applicants for schemes in which they prefer not to live. For example; two flats in Jubilee Court were refused 17 and 23 times respectively, and had to be advertised five times before they were accepted. Most of the applicants had not placed the bids themselves, some stated that they were not ready to move, and many had no desire to attend the viewing.

3.5.8 Some additional general factors for the delay in letting some sheltered properties are the concern for potential residents about managing the moving process. Especially where they have no immediate source of support, and in some instances the absence of carpets at the property create a further disincentive.

3.5.9 Vacancies can be repeatedly turned down by short-listed bidders, as most applicants are not penalised for refusing properties. This results in some degree of 'window shopping' and a willingness to wait until the perfect property becomes available. This even occurs in traditionally popular schemes such as Elwyn Jones Court.

3.5.10 To overcome some of the issues mentioned above, we are currently carrying out a programme to remodel some schemes with shared facilities to incorporate shower rooms within the flat. We decorate properties which are in need of a fresh coat of paint, and the Lettings Officers suggest sources of support for people who might need assistance with their house move. During next Spring we will contact applicants and invite them to 'open house' sessions at some of the schemes in order that they can have more knowledge about what the various schemes have to offer.

3.6.0 Stock investment and asset management – Performance Quarter One

Indicator	End of Year Performance 08/09	First Quarter 09/10	Second Quarter 09/10	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures 2 nd Quarter	Future Targets	
					09/10	10/11
Emergency Repairs Completed in time	96.8 % 98.48 % (Mears) 94.49 % (Kier)	99.15% 99.79 % (Mears) 98.22 % (Kier)	97.86% 99.09% (Mears) 96.24 % (Kier)	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 99.00	99 %	
No of Emergency Repairs completed	7,755 4,414 (Mears) 3,341 (Kier)	1645 969 (Mears) 676 (Kier)	1733 989 (Mears) 744 (Kier)	n.a	n.a.	
Urgent Repairs Completed in time	92.53 % 95.35 % (Mears) 89.18 % (Kier)	97.43% 100% (Mears) 94.31 % (Kier)	97.26 % 99.26% (Mears) 94.43 % (Kier)	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 97.86	98 %	
No of Urgent Repairs completed	4,391 2,388 (Mears) 2,005 (Kier)	740 406 (Mears) 334 (Kier)	914 537 (Mears) 377 (Kier)	n.a.	n.a.	**
Routine Repairs Completed within target time	96.01 % 97.86 % (Mears) 93.53 % (Kier)	99.08% 99.78 % (Mears) 97.97 % (Kier)	98.76% 99.51% (Mears) 97.57 % (Kier)	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 99.04	98 %	**
No of Routine Repairs completed	19,697 11,305 (Mears) 8,419 (Kier)	5107 3133 (Mears) 1974 (Kier)	4687 2873 (Mears) 1814 (Kier)	n.a.	n.a.	**
BV72 Right to Repair orders completed within target time	96.87 %	98.99 %	97.94%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 98.47% Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper	97 %	**

Indicator	End of Year Performance 08/09	First Quarter 09/10	Second Quarter 09/10	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures 2 nd Quarter	Future Targets	
					09/10	10/11
				Quartile 98.86%		
BV73 Ave time to complete routine repairs	15 days	13 days	12 days	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 12.29 Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 11.32	14 days	**
NI158 % of council homes that are non- decent	48.89%	42.84%	40.91%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 15.73 Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 6.9	36%	**
BV63 - Energy Efficiency (SAP Rating)	75.9	76	76.1	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 73.50 target Stock Retained Benchmarking: Upper Quartile 72.9 target	76.5*	**
LPI G3 Citywide % of stock with up to date gas safety certificates	99.61%	99.79%	99.77%	HouseMark Major Cities Benchmarking: Upper Quartile target 100%	100 %	**
Mears Area	99.49 %	99.79%	99.84%	n.a.	100 %	**
PH Jones Area	99.78 %	99.8%	99.69%	n.a.	100 %	**
*Using 2001 SAP formula. This remains the formula in current use.						

Indicator	End of Year Performance 08/09	First Quarter 09/10	Second Quarter 09/10	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures 2 nd Quarter	Future Targets	
					09/10	10/11
**Targets will be set in conjunction with the new repairs and maintenance contract.						

3.6.1 Responsive Repairs

3.6.2 Performance on completing routine repairs within target (20 days from issue of order) remains above target by approximately 1% and is just behind top quartile performance. Mears performance is also above target for emergency and urgent repairs and sits within the high performing authorities. Kier performance has dropped slightly over the last quarter, a number of administration issues which have been addressed.

3.6.3 This action has had an immediate impact with October's performance information indicating that Kier's performance is now in line with their performance earlier in the year. For October Kier completed 97% of emergency orders in time, 96% of urgent orders in time, and over 98% of routine repairs in time. In total in October 24 orders were completed late by Kier out of the 999 orders which were completed.

3.6.4 Decent Homes and SAP

3.6.5 The capital programme for 2009/2010 continues to deliver improvements in the standards of resident's homes notably with the boiler installation, door replacement, kitchen and bathroom programmes. These programmes have delivered a 2% improvement in Brighton & Hove City Council's performance against the decent homes standard over the last quarter. Energy efficiency (as measured by the SAP rating) remains an area of strong performance with a small improvement over the last quarter, Brighton & Hove City Council are approximately 3 points higher than other high performing authorities on this measure.

3.6.6 Gas Servicing

3.6.7 The percentage of homes with a current gas safety certificate remains high with excellent performance being delivered in partnership by Brighton & Hove City Council, Mears Group and PH Jones. Performance has been stable over the first two quarters of this year and the current figure of 99.77% shows a small improvement on the 2008/2009 end of year figure. Currently just 24 properties have an overdue service and none of these are a year or more overdue

3.7.0 Estates Service

Indicator	End of Year Performance 08/09	First Quarter 09/10	Second Quarter 09/10	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures 2 nd Quarter	Future Targets	
					09/10	10/11
Completion of cleaning tasks	96%	92%	95.6%	n.a.*	98%	98.5%
Bulk refuse removal Targets met within timescale	Emergency 77% Routine 84%	Emergency n.a Routine 95%	E 95.83% R 98.23%	n.a.*	E 100% R 95%	E 100% R 96%
Graffiti removal Targets met within timescale	Emergency 100% Routine 88%	61%	E 83.33% R 63.88%	n.a.*	E 100% R 95%	E 100% R 96%
* Work will take place with HouseMark in the coming year to develop comparative figures						

3.7.1 There has been an improvement in cleaning performance this quarter. This has coincided with the last of the site-based cleaners being set up and the introduction of two Cleaning Team Leaders. In addition to cleaning, these members of staff work closely with other cleaners to ensure they are cleaning to right standard and using the most effective and efficient methods. This almost completes the implementation of the recommendations made by the Chairman's Working Group on the Estates Service last year.

3.7.2 Work is currently in progress on improving performance reporting on this service, to ensure that the quality of cleaning is assessed as well as quantity.

3.7.3 A new inspection regime is being tested on the Bristol Estate, which includes residents rating the standard of cleaning. If this method proves to be robust and satisfactory to customers it will be implemented throughout the city for the start of the new financial year.

3.7.4 Whilst performance for bulk refuse removal remains at a high level this quarter, Performance in graffiti removal has improved. This is due to the fact that Neighbourhood Response team (formerly known as Mobile Estate Wardens) received training in October on graffiti removal and are therefore able to cover this work, should one or both of the two operatives who work on graffiti removal, be absent from work. It is intended that this will improve the number of graffiti removal jobs completed within target.

3.8.0 Anti-social Behaviour

Indicator	End of Year Performance 08/09	First Quarter 09/10	Second Quarter 09/10	Top 25% of Performing Authorities Figures 2 nd Quarter	Future Targets	
					09/10	10/11
% of Introductory Tenants reported to be involved in anti-social behaviour	15.51% 548 lets during the year 85 Cases	0.81% 222 lets 18 cases	0.86% 219 19 cases	Figure not recorded by other authorities in this way	12%	
Number of ASB complaints closed due to no further action required and/or the case being resolved	826	Ongoing IT project		n.a.*	n.a.*	
Number of evictions	7			n.a.*	n.a.*	
*Area currently under development with HouseMark						

3.8.1 Through the introduction of the 'Turning the Tide' initiative, the Housing Management team continue to enhance our information system whilst developing new performance indicators for benchmarking. Once this has been established data will be presented retrospectively.

3.8.2 The 'Turning the Tide' initiative intends to pilot new and innovative approaches to deal robustly with antisocial behaviour and social exclusion. The initiative intends to build upon existing success and good practice in order to deliver services which are focussed and more effective at addressing both early and later stages of ASB and which offer greater support and involvement to our communities. Turning the Tide intends to develop further and embed joint working with partner agencies through the creation of a Casework forum and a Housing and Estates forum.

3.8.3 We know that in order to address systemic change and multiple or complex needs we need to design services to be accessible and responsive to those in multiple needs. We intend to develop services to ensure simplicity of access, individual support; and for services to be available at the earliest opportunity when we have any indication that individuals, households or communities are experiencing or be at risk of deprivation or antisocial behaviour. We know that early intervention is very effective and that a dual approach of support and

enforcement has been successful with the most 'hard to reach' socially excluded groups in the city and in resolving situations of ASB.

- 3.8.4 The 'Turning the Tide' initiative will offer three levels of intervention: Universal, Enhanced and Intensive. Each level of intervention is responsive to the particular requirements of individuals and households who are causing ASB, They offer progressively more concentrated levels of personalised enforcement and support interventions intended to stop the offending behaviour and help to change behaviour and reintegrate individuals into the community
- 3.8.5 Housing Management and Housing Need & Social Inclusion are well placed to deliver co-ordinated services to perpetrators of ASB, with the lever of continued housing as a considerable motivating force or "carrot" for behaviour change. We know that everyone has the right not to experience anti-social behaviour within their community and the initiative intends to develop services to deal with this problem as it arises.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Following the presentation to Housing Management Consultative Committee, this report will be presented at the next available round of Area Panels. In addition it will be provided, as appropriate, to the customer lead working groups involved with reviewing performance, policy and future prospects across the service.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Most performance measures discussed in this report have financial implications which will be included in the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) forecast. For example, any improvement in turnaround times or reductions in empty property numbers increases the amount of rent collected. Similarly an increase in energy efficiency will result in a reduction in outgoings. Improvements in performance will, in general, lead to more resources being available for tenants' services in the future.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen

Date: 25/11/09

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are none

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 25/11/09

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Equalities implications are included within the body of the report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Sustainability implications are included within the body of the 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 Not applicable to this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

