

HOUSING COMMITTEE	Agenda Item 130
	Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing Committee workplan progress update and Housing performance report - Quarter 2, 2020/21		
Date of Meeting:	20 January 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ododo Dafé	Tel: 01273 293201
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 This report illustrates progress against Housing Committee work plan 2019-23 priorities and targets, as well as other Housing service targets. The report covers Quarter 2 of the financial year 2020/21 and is attached as Appendix 1.

1.2 Information highlights from the quarter include:

- **Customer feedback** – 96 compliments received from customers, and 57% of stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days
- **Private sector housing** – 27 empty homes returned to use
- **Major adaptations** – waiting times for applications were 14.9 weeks for private sector homes, and 7.2 weeks for council homes
- **Housing needs** – at end September, 369 people sleeping rough or at risk of doing so were accommodated as part of the Council’s Covid-19 response
- **Council housing** – re-let times continue to be impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, and 50 homes were let in an average of 96 days
- **Repairs and maintenance** – 99.1% of emergency repairs were completed within 24 hours and 71.1% of routine repairs were completed within 28 days.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Housing Committee notes the report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The report uses red, amber and green traffic light symbols to provide an indication of performance, and also trend arrows to provide an indication of movement from the previous quarter.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION:

- 4.1 This report will go to Area Panels in January 2020 for residents to comment and enquire upon. It will include a summary of feedback about the Quarter 1 report from the September Area Panels and responses, including changes which have since been made as a result of feedback, plus proposed future changes.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The financial implications are contained in the report. An area of performance with significant financial effect is the ability to collect rents from tenants as well as the impact of the length of time that properties are empty. Over the last two years the percentage of rent collected has fallen in the HRA, and although the performance still compares favourably when benchmarked against other stock holding councils around the country, this is of concern and a review is underway to identify actions that will help to improve this. Indicator 15.1 shows that during the second quarter of 2020/21, rent arrears for current tenants have decreased which is good news and likely to be a catch up of benefit payments being made as more tenants move to Universal Credit. The Housing Income Management Team is undertaking targeted work with these tenants and an additional post has been included in the HRA budget for 2020/21 to enhance the support the council can directly offer tenants around welfare rights and appeals. It is difficult to estimate the effects of the pandemic on income collection at this time, but indications are that collection rates have stabilised since the beginning of the year.
- 5.2 Indicator 15.12 shows that there are 230 empty council homes and 15.10 states that the average re-let time is 96 days when major works are excluded. At an average rent of approximately £93 per week, each empty property costs on average £8,928 in lost rent. This also extends the time those on the Housing Register are waiting for council housing and increases the costs incurred on temporary accommodation. These delays have been caused by the pandemic and also the industrial dispute within the Repairs and Maintenance Service. It is therefore imperative re-let times are improved going forward so that the HRA can maximise its rental income, reduce waiting times and reduce the costs of temporary accommodation in the general fund.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 08/01/2021

Legal Implications:

- 5.2. There are no significant legal implications to draw to Members' attention arising from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 04/12/2020

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The average energy efficiency rating of council homes stands at 67.5 (out of a maximum of 100) and efforts to increase this rating contribute towards the council's sustainability commitments and help to reduce fuel poverty.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. Cases of anti-social behaviour involving criminal activity are worked on in partnership with the police and other agencies.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct risk and opportunity implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 A large number of services were stopped or significantly impacted in March 2020 in order to comply with Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions.

Corporate or Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 There are no direct corporate or citywide implications arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Housing Committee workplan progress update and Housing performance report - Quarter 2, 2020/21

Background Documents:

None

