

Housing Cabinet Members Meeting

Agenda Item 68

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Housing Management Performance Report
Date of Meeting: 12 November 2008
Report of: Director of Adult Social Care & Health
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 To provide the Housing Cabinet Member's meeting 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 the Housing Cabinet Member's Meeting 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

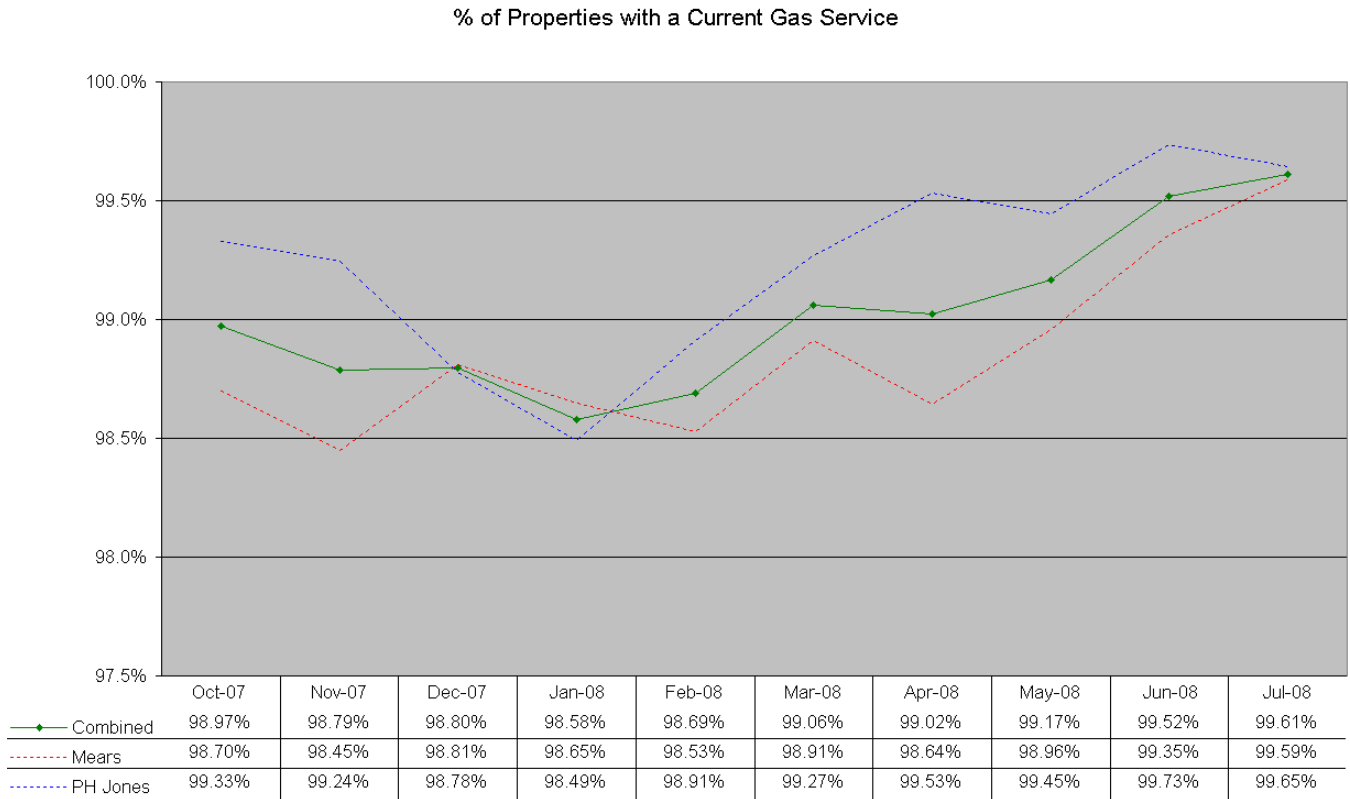
The table below shows performance for other areas of repairs and maintenance:

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

