

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE SUB COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 25

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing & Social Inclusion Performance Report Quarter 1 2012/13		
Date of Meeting:	23 October 2012		
Report of:	Head of Housing & Social Inclusion		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ododo Dafé	Tel: 293201
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This Housing & Social Inclusion performance report covers Quarter 1 of the financial year 2012-2013 and follows the format for presenting information agreed at the previous meetings. It incorporates the following changes suggested at the last meeting: rent collection rate broken down by area, further information on Notices of Seeking Possession and information on arrears processes. Benchmarking information and year end figures will be included in the year end report for 2012/13.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:







- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee notes and comments on the report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The report continues the use of the 'RAG' rating system of 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 reporting period. Where indicators are red or amber explanations have been provided.

3.2 Key to symbols used in the report

See table below:

Status		Trend	
Performance is below target (red)		Poorer than previous reporting period	
Performance is close to achieving target, but in need of improvement (amber)		Same as previous reporting period	
Performance is on or above target (green)		Improvement on previous reporting period	

3.3 Rent collection and current arrears

*As these targets are year end (rather than for each quarter), no traffic lights or trend arrows will be applied to this table until the Quarter 4 2012/13 report.

Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status*	Trend*
Rent collected as proportion of rent due each year	Y	98.75% (£47,472,364)	98.83% (£47,511,523)	-	-
Tenants with more than seven weeks rent arrears	Y	2.85%	2.46% (281 – Cumulative Figure)	-	-
Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP) served for rent arrears	Y	27.02% (706)	5.08% (139 NoSPs)	-	-
Households evicted because of rent arrears	Y	Less than 0.29% (less than 35)	0.02% (2)	-	-
Rent loss due to empty properties	N	1.6%	1.22% (£575,500)	-	-
Total former tenant arrears	N	£511,522	£539,076	-	-
Rechargeable debt collected	Y	20% (£66,758)	1.63% (£3,876)	-	-

3.3.1

Following a query from the last HMCSC, further information is included on our rent arrears processes. The Housing Income Management Team continues to focus on preventing and limiting debt by helping to maximise tenants' income and offering support and advice to those in financial difficulty. We adopt a firm but fair approach to debt recovery and make every effort to strike a balance between the financial needs of the council and the social well being of tenants. We support tenants in arrears and work with them to agree realistic and affordable repayment plans.

Where there are other issues that impact on a tenant being able to pay their rent, for example physical and mental health issues, substance misuse issues, or other social issues, we take a holistic approach to resolving these in order to prevent debts escalating and avoid legal action. This includes early intervention and partnership working to resolve individual tenant's needs. The same approach is taken where legal action is likely to have a significant impact on households with children.

We provide a fast track Housing Benefit claims service for all new tenants and assist existing tenants to make claims. Tenants who are liable to pay rent and/or other charges are expected to pay in advance prior to receiving the keys to their new property. We offer a range of payment methods for rent and other charges 24 hours a day, 7 days a week e.g. in person, over the telephone, on line or via banks and paypoint outlets.

Tenants who accrue arrears are contacted as soon as possible in order to establish the cause of the arrears. Officers will make personal contact wherever possible as this is a

proven aid to tenancy sustainment. Where a tenant is unable to clear the debt in full, a repayment plan is negotiated to clear the arrears over a reasonable period of time.

Every effort is made to support tenants in debt who make and keep to a repayment plan in order to sustain their tenancy. At all stages of the recovery process tenants are offered private interviews, benefits advice and debt counselling which is either provided by the council or an outside agency. Where there is a wilful refusal to engage or keep to arrangements we take legal action to recover the debt.

3.3.2 Notices of Seeking Possession (NoSPs) for rent arrears



Following a query from the last HMCSC, comparative year end figures for the number and percentage of secure council tenants served a Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP) for rent arrears are provided in the table below. The number of NOSPs served in Quarter 1 2012/13 stands at 139, down from 165 in the last comparable period of Quarter 1 2011/12. Notices of Seeking Possession are usually served after a tenant has fallen four to five weeks in arrears and will follow early intervention work by the Housing Income Management team to try and reduce the debt. The team will review each case before serving a NoSP to see if there are any circumstances such as outstanding housing benefit payments which have contributed to the arrears.

Year	Number of NOSPs	Percentage of secure tenants served a NOSP
2009/10	753	26.97%
2010/11	750	28.36%
2011/12	706	27.02%

3.3.3 Percentage of rent collected as proportion of rent due each year by area

Area	Target	Actual
North (includes Sheltered housing)	98.95%	98.98%
West	98.74%	98.85%
Central	98.85%	98.94%
East	98.51%	98.64%
All areas	98.75%	98.83%

3.4 Empty home turnaround time

Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status	Trend
Average re-let time in days (all properties)	N	21	14		
A table relating to long term empty properties is attached as Appendix 1					

3.4.1


























The empty home turnaround time is measured according to the BV212 performance indicator set up by central government. The BV212 is the average amount of time it takes to re-let local authority housing. All authorities report on 'normal voids' and the turnaround time excludes properties where major works have been carried out; mutual exchanges or properties that the council intends to sell or demolish.

Major works means:

- structural works – which include floors, walls and roofs
- Asbestos removal
- Works to amenities, where lacking (gas, electric, heating)
- Consequential works as a result of major works
- Fire and flood

Time is also excluded from the average turn around time of a property when used by the police or when squatted. It is only the time that the property is out of use that gets excluded, not the whole period for which the property is empty. The re-let time increases to 31 days for Quarter 1 when excluded properties are taken into account.

3.5 Property & Investment

Carrying out repairs to your home					
Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status	Trend
Emergency repairs completed in time	Y	99%	99.46% (1,485)		
Urgent repairs completed in time	Y	98%	100.00% (78)		
Routine repairs completed in time	Y	98%	99.83% (8,026)		
Average time to complete routine repairs	Y	15 days	7 days		
Percentage of appointments kept	N	95%	91.44%		
Tenant satisfaction with repairs	N	95%	98.84% (19.8% sample, 1,839 survey responses)		
Percentage of responsive repairs passing post-inspection	Y	95%	93.39% (566)		
Percentage of repairs completed right first time	Y	97%	97.90% (9,765)		
Cancelled repair jobs	N	-	16.3% (1,724)	-	-
Home Improvements					
Percentage of homes that are decent	N	89.9%	89.5%		
Energy efficiency rating of homes (SAP 2009)	N	61 (April 2012 target)	61 (April 2012 figure)		-
Percentage of planned works passing post-inspection	Y	97%	99.46% (556)		
Stock with up-to-date gas certificates	Y	100%	99.78% (10,669)		
Empty Homes					
Percentage of empty properties passing post-inspection	Y	98%	99.43% (175)		

3.5.1

Percentage of appointments kept

Around 34% of late appointments were up to an hour late; and a further 58% up to 24 hours late. Reasons for lateness include traffic and previous jobs taking longer than expected. Mears are working to ensure operatives log progress on their handsets in a timely manner, as some appointments are incorrectly recorded as late.

Percentage of responsive repairs passing post-inspection

Performance was impacted by the post-inspection sample rate being smaller than usual in Quarter 1 (between 6 and 7% against a target of 10%). Both the sample rate and performance are back on track as of August 2012. Mears are addressing the quality of responsive repairs with staff training, and Property & Investment will continue to monitor their progress.

Cancelled repair jobs

During Quarter 1, there were a total of 1,724 orders that were cancelled:

- 36% of cancelled jobs were due to difficulties gaining access to the property;
- 26% were admin related e.g. IT interface failure or 'info only' orders;
- 15% were due to incorrect or insufficient details e.g. wrong property address or job description; and
- 11% at the request of the tenant.

The remaining 12% of cancelled jobs were for a variety of miscellaneous reasons which individually make up very small proportions of overall cancellations. We are working with Mears to ensure that staff are aware of the importance of checking details with tenants when issuing a repair, and are looking into introducing online repairs reporting for tenants. This should reduce the number of jobs cancelled due to insufficient details.

Percentage of homes that are decent

Although performance is slightly below target for Quarter 4 we are still progressing towards our target of full decency by December 2013. This is an interim target that is monitored by the Core Group in order to identify any issues in meeting the longer-term target and to decide upon action to rectify them if performance is significantly behind. The Core Group is aware of this underperformance and will review it in October.





















Energy efficiency rating of homes (SAP)

In line with government guidance and changes to the way SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) is calculated, we are now using the approved national SAP 2009 methodology. This uses a narrower scale (1 to 100) than the previous methodology, which is why both the actual figure and the target appear lower than last quarter. However, our energy efficiency performance remains on target.

Stock with up-to-date gas certificates

Of the 10,693 properties requiring gas safety certificates, 24 were overdue at the end of Quarter 1. It is expected this figure will remain small and fluctuate slightly over time. Overdue cases are referred to tenancy management, who take action (including legal proceedings where necessary) to gain access to the property to carry out the check. Of 118 referred cases in this period, 113 (96%) were carried out within 90 days. The longest case took 181 days, as the property became empty (and therefore safe in terms of legal requirements for gas safety) after 74 days and the gas certificate was issued at a later date once the new tenant moved in. All gas access referrals are treated as open cases until the gas certificate is received by the Property & Investment Team.

3.6 Estates Service

Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status	Trend
Percentage passing quality inspections of our cleaning service	Y	98%	99% (201)		
Percentage passing quality inspections of our minor repairs service	Y	98%	99% (69)		
Completion of cleaning tasks	N	98%	98% (13,247)		
Emergency removal of bulk waste within 24-hour target	N	100%	100% (4)		
Routine removal of bulk within 7-day target	N	97%	98% (870)		
Emergency removal of graffiti within 24-hour target	N	100%	66% (2)		
Routine removal of graffiti within 7-day target	N	100%	100% (3)		
Replacement of lights within 3-day target time	N	100%	100% (9)		
Routine replacement of lights within 7-day target	N	97%	99% (458)		
Neighbourhood Response Team jobs completed within target times	N	96%	96% (1,561)		

3.6.1

Emergency removal of graffiti within 24-hour target

Of the three reports in Quarter 1, two met the target. The third case was overdue because the removal process had to be repeated to ensure the job was done to the highest standard. Whilst the graffiti itself is usually removed within target in such cases, these jobs are not counted as complete until all work, such as repainting, has been carried out.

3.7 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)











3.7.1 The service pledges relating to ASB concern areas of work that do not easily lend themselves to target setting, eg the number of new cases or the number of new cases resolved. We are currently looking at ways of improving our anti social behaviour monitoring in order to ensure we can report on the issues that matter most to our residents. Information relating to each service pledge is presented in the table below.

Activity against the ASB service pledges		
Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Actual
Number of new cases with the ASB team	Y	5
Number of enforcement and support actions taken by Housing & Social Inclusion	Y	736
Number of closed cases that were resolved by the ASB team	Y	6
Customer satisfaction with cases managed by the ASB team (very or fairly satisfied)	Y	100% (2 interviews)

3.7.2 **Customer satisfaction with cases managed by the ASB team**

The ASB team aims to call all victims of closed cases in order to interview them to find out how satisfied they were with the outcome of the case and how it was handled by staff. Interviews are not carried out for all closed cases because the case was either not reported by a victim (e.g. it was reported by the Police) or that it was not possible to make phone contact with the victim after several attempts. Examples of feedback from interviewees in Quarter 1 included that the team's actions made the victim feel safe, and that the problems stopped almost immediately once the council became involved.

3.8 Sheltered housing

Performance Indicator	Service Pledge	Target	Actual	Status	Trend
People with an up to date support plan	Y	100% 915	96% 877		
People who decline a support plan	N	0% -	2% 20		
New residents with a support plan completed within 21 days	Y	100% 20	95% 19		
Call each resident personally (if requested)	Y	100%	100%		
Provision of at least one social activity per week (in 21 of our 24 schemes)	Y	100%	100%		

3.8.1

Percentage of people with an up to date support plan

Out of 915 residents, 877 have an up to date support plan, with 20 declining a plan and 18 where a target has been missed. This represents a slight decline (1%) in performance between Quarter 1 and the previous quarter. Fluctuations in performance are caused by missed appointments, which are largely due to a tenant being too unwell to make their review appointment with the Scheme Manager. Sheltered staff continue to prioritise their work on assisting vulnerable residents through the support planning work, and the recent introduction of a new ICT system for storing support plan data will make it will be easier for staff to monitor performance and plan support work more effectively.

Percentage of people who decline a support plan

The number of people who decline a support plan increased by one from the last quarter and now stands at 20, which represents 2% of tenants. It is possible that there remains a small core group who choose not to receive this part of the sheltered service.

Percentage of new residents with a support plan completed within 21 days

19 out of 20 new tenants had a support plan completed within 21 days of moving into sheltered housing in Quarter 1, an improvement of 3% in performance compared to the previous quarter. The one case where the target was missed was due to the new tenant being too unwell. The average time for a new support plan to be completed was 10 days in Quarter 1.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Resident involvement is key to the successful management of council owned homes and also the setting and reviewing of our policies and procedures.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Most performance measures discussed in this report have financial implications and these are considered within the monthly financial monitoring reports. For example, any improvement in turnaround times or a reduction in rent arrears increases the amount of rent collected. Improvements in performance will, in general, lead to more resources being available for tenants' services in the future.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 08/10/12

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are legal implications attached to many of the performance indicators mentioned in the report. For example, the service of a NoSP is a pre-condition to the issue of possession proceedings in the County Court for non-payment of rent. Before making an order for possession, the court must be satisfied that not only are there arrears, but that in all the circumstances of the case, it is reasonable to make an order. However, none of implications are so significant that they need to be specifically drawn to Members' attention. It is not considered that any individual's human rights are adversely affected by the information contained within the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 03/10/12

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Where appropriate, equalities implications are included within the body of the report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Where appropriate, sustainability implications are included within the body of the report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

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

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

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

Public Health Implications:

5.7 There are no direct public health implications arising from this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.8 There are no direct corporate or city wide implications arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Appendix 1. Long term empty properties

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

