

Brighton & Hove City Council

Housing Committee

Agenda Item

Subject: Housing Committee workplan progress update and Housing performance report - Quarter 3 2021/22

Date of meeting: 16 March 2022

Report of: Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report 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 3 of the 2021/22 financial year and is attached as Appendix 1.

1.2 Information highlights from the quarter include:

- **Customer feedback** – 60 compliments received from customers, and 82% of stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days
- **Private sector housing** – 53% of Houses in Multiple Occupation have met all special conditions (for licences issued over 12 months ago)
- **Major adaptations** – waiting times for applications were 15.7 weeks for private sector homes, down from 21.3 weeks during the last quarter
- **Housing needs** – 1,965 households placed in temporary accommodation, down from 2,012 at the end of the last quarter
- **Housing supply** – 20 additional council homes delivered through buy backs
- **Council housing management** – 122 council homes were re-let in an average of 89 days excluding major works, up from 66 during the last quarter
- **Council housing repairs and maintenance** – the proportion of 'Decent Homes' increased from 92.9% to 96.9%

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Housing Committee notes the report.

3. Context and background information

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. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 This report is for noting so alternative options are not required.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 This report went to Area Panels in February 2022 for residents to comment and enquire upon and discuss.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Members are invited to comment and enquire upon this regular quarterly report, and to make recommendations for future versions.

7. Financial implications

7.1 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. The collection of rents at 15.1 in Appendix 1 show that in Quarter 3, there has been a 0.66% decrease in the collection of rents with collection now forecast at 95.58%. This equates to a forecast increase in arrears of £0.400m.

7.2 Indicator 15.18 shows that the number of general needs empty properties has increased from 273 to 293 in quarter 3 and current forecasts suggest that this is causing an overspend of close to £1m for the HRA due to the loss of rent and extra council tax costs incurred. However, the good news is that there has been an increase to the number of lettings during quarter 3, from 98 to 122, above pre pandemic levels. However, this has still not been sufficient to reduce the backlog in quarter 3. Having empty properties extends the time those on the Housing Register are waiting for council housing and increases the costs incurred on temporary accommodation in the general fund. On average, one empty property costs the HRA an estimated £93 per week in lost rent and also there are further council tax costs are incurred. The average re-let time for quarter 3 is 223 days. Therefore, on average a void property is costing an estimated £3,000. The

service is working on the backlog of empty properties and extra staff have been recruited to assist in lettings. Recovery efforts to tackle the backlog of empty council homes include using approved procurement routes to increase contractor capacity and large-scale recruitment of new permanent staff who can carry out works directly.

Name of finance officer consulted: Monica Brooks Date consulted 07/03/22

8. Legal implications

8.1 There are no significant legal implications arising from this report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date consulted 14/02/22

9. Equalities implications

9.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

10. Sustainability implications

10.1 Although this report is for noting, the workplan updates within it include progress on objectives relating to sustainability, as well as monitoring of the average energy efficiency rating of council homes, which stands at 68.1 (out of a maximum of 100).

11. Other Implications

11.1 There are no other direct implications arising from this report, which is for noting.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Housing Committee workplan progress update and Housing performance report - Quarter 3 2021/22

