

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 68

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Housing Management Performance Report (Quarter 2)
Date of Meeting: 13 December 2010
Report of: Head of Housing & Social Inclusion
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Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This is the Quarter 2 report for Housing Management performance for the year 2010-2011.

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 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Quarter 2 10/11	Targets	
				10/11	11/12
BV66a - Rent Collection	98.29%	98.37%	98.5%	98.68%	98.86%
BV66a - Rent Collection (Central housing area)	98.32%	98.37%	98.51%	99.03%	99.24%
BV66a - Rent Collection (East housing area)	98.00%	98.15%	98.27%	98.13%	98.25%
BV66a - Rent Collection (North housing area)	98.47%	98.48%	98.72%	98.82%	98.96%
BV66a - Rent Collection (West housing area)	98.47%	98.56%	98.6%	99.12%	99.32%
BV66a - Rent Collection (Temp. Accom.)	98.65%	94.42%	89.88%	96.95%	98%
BV66b - Those with arrears of more than seven weeks	4.91%	4.15%	4.05%	4.13%	3.72%
BV66c - The NOSP figure	26.97%	7.42%	15.4%	23.80%	22.39%
BV66d - The eviction figure (% tenants evicted for rent arrears)	0.12%	0.02%	0.09%	less than 35 evictions per annum: 0.29%	
% rent lost due to voids	2.05%	2.10%	2.12%	Currently under review	
Total former tenant arrears (excl. of Temporary Accom.)	£780,280	£674,487	£603,827	£650,000	£625,000
% Collection rate for former tenant arrears (excl. of Temp. Accomm)	22.88%	17.09%*	33.46%	20%	20%
% of write-offs for former tenant arrears (exclusive of Temp. Accom.)	9.30%	16.78%*	32.96%	40%	
Total recharge debt	£190,138	£191,648	£195,483	£272,110	
% Collection rate for recharges	19.63%	13.13%	21.06%	20%	
% Leaseholder recovery rate	84%	67%	68%	85%	Not set
% Leaseholder recovery rate on recoverable arrears	92%	Not collected quarterly	Not collected quarterly	92%	Not set

*Corrected figures as per letter of 20 October to HMCC members

3.1.1 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

BVPI66a

The collection rate forecast at the end of September 2010 was 98.50% compared to 98.27% at the end of Quarter 2 2009/10. Since September 2009 rent arrears have reduced by £90,450.

The Rent Income Excellence Network (RIEN) is a specialist network that draws together and shares best practice from the country's top performers in the field of rent arrears and collection. The RIEN benchmarking data for Quarter 2 places Brighton & Hove in the top quartile, making it the only unitary authority to achieve a collection rate above 98.39%.

BVPI66b

At the end of Quarter 2 2010/11 the percentage of tenants with more than seven weeks arrears was 4.05%, a reduction of 1.21% since Quarter 2 2009/10.

BVPI66c

Between April and September 2010 the number of tenants served with a Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP) was 411 compared to 354 during the same period in 2009/10. This increase is a direct result of taking early action to minimise debt.

BVPI66d

Rent arrears evictions between April and September 2010 totalled 11. During the same period in 2009/10 there were seven rent arrears evictions.

3.1.2 Former Tenant Arrears

There has been a reduction of £70,660 in former tenant arrears since the end of Quarter 1 2010/11. The collection rate at the end of Quarter 2 was 33.46%.

The recovery of former tenant debt is part of the overall approach to income collection that begins before the start of the tenancy. Over the last five years this approach has resulted in fewer rent arrears evictions and a reduction in the average amount of debt when tenancies end. Tracing processes are thorough with both internal and external systems. The team also works closely with Homemove to minimise the amount of transferring and re-housing debt.

At the end of Quarter 1 the amount of former tenant debt recovered was £115,272 and the total former tenant debt was £674,487. At the end of Quarter 2 the total former tenant debt had reduced to £603,827 and a further £86,769 had been recovered bringing the total amount collected for the year so far to £202,041. In addition to the amount recovered the total former tenant debt figure includes new debt and debt that has been written on and written-off existing accounts.

As the total former tenant debt had reduced and the amount recovered had increased, the percentage collection rate increased proportionately.

The former tenant arrears recovery process is robust and there is a clear process for write offs. The majority of such write-offs occur where it has not been possible to trace the tenant or where the tenant has died and there is no

money in the estate. Even if a debt is written-off as untraceable, it can be written back on if the former tenant is subsequently traced; this may occur when the former tenant reapplies for housing.

At the end of Quarter 1 the amount of former tenant debt written off was £113,184. Of this £52,608 (46%) was written off as 'no trace' and £41,144 (36%) was written off as 'tenant deceased – no estate'. At the end of Quarter 2 a further £85,823 had been written off bringing the total amount written off for the year so far to £199,007.

As the total former tenant debt had reduced and the amount written off had increased, the percentage write off rate has also increased proportionately.

Former tenant arrears performance data is collected from RIEN members every six months. The data for September 2010 shows an average collection rate of 12.53% for our benchmarking group, placing us in the top quartile.

3.1.3 Recharges

There were 120 new recharge cases between April and September 2010. The total amount charged during this period was £71,818 making the average new recharge debt £598 ie £71,818 divided by 120 = £598.

The council recharges for work that is carried out by its contractors which the tenant is responsible for under the terms of the tenancy agreement. For example, removing and disposing of items left by the outgoing tenant such as furniture, white goods, personal belongings, rubbish etc. The majority of recharges are former tenant debts and the collection rate targets have been set accordingly.

3.1.4 Percentage leaseholder recovery rate on gross debt

This shows the collection rate on the total amount of service charge owed to the council. Comparison needs to be made with the equivalent quarter for the previous year and not with the previous quarter for the current year on account of these figures being cumulative. The 68% rate reported for Quarter 2 can be compared to 67% for the same quarter last year. It should also be noted that the service charge is variable, and that invoicing is carried out at different points through the year, making the comparison of figures inexact.

3.1.5 Percentage leaseholder recoverable arrears

This shows the collection rate on the total amount of service charge owed excluding debts where payment arrangements have been entered into; Charging Orders and legal charges; amounts that are formally in dispute and amounts where legal recovery action is being taken. This collection rate is only calculated annually.

3.2.0 **Sheltered Housing**

3.2.1 Annual Support Plans

3.2.2 Every resident should have a personalised support plan, reviewed each year by their Scheme Manager.

Total Data	Target (2010/11)	Current Quarter July – Sept. 2010	Last Quarter April – June 2010
% of people with an up to date support plan	100%	82%	76.5%
% of people who decline a support plan	0%	4%	4%

3.2.3 There has been an improvement in performance and more support plans are up to date. Performance in September was the best since May 2009 with 86% of plans up to date (when 87% were up to date). The current quarter's performance is higher than the average across 2009/10.

3.2.4 Within this general performance, the range is from 56% at Lavender House to 100% at Broadfields, Jubilee Court, Manor Paddock and Southease.

3.2.5 There has also been a marked improvement in some larger schemes where there had been a backlog of plans that needed reviewing:

Scheme	Sept. 2010	July 2010	Feb. 2010
Elwyn Jones Crt.	75% (+36% since Feb.10)	56% (+17% since Feb.10)	39%
Laburnum Grove	76% (+27% since Feb.10)	72% (+23% since Feb.10)	49%
Somerset Point	89% (+55% since Feb.10)	62% (+28% since Feb.10)	34%

3.2.6 New Support Plans

3.2.7 Every new resident should have a personalised support plan, completed within 21 days of moving into their home by their Scheme Manager.

	End of year Performance 2009/10	Quarter 2 July-Sept. 2010	Quarter 1 April – June 2010	Future Target (10/11)
% new residents with a support plan completed within 21 days	Not recorded	71%	79%	100%

3.2.8 During the quarter 21 residents moved into a new sheltered home. Of these 15 had their support plan completed or reviewed within 21 days. One declined a support plan. The six residents where a target was missed had their plans completed within an average of 29 days (22 days, 22 days, 25 days, 30 days, 31 days, 46 days). Sickness has been a major contributory factor as to why targets have not been met.

3.2.9 The short fall in support plan performance is largely due to the catch up in the four larger schemes. Additional resources have enabled the performance to improve during this year. In a small minority of schemes, performance issues

are being addressed with the staff concerned. Measures being put in place to address support plan performance include:

- Scheme Managers reporting monthly on their performance (enabling better planning and support at supervision and appraisal sessions)
- Time being set aside each week by Scheme Managers to ensure support plans are kept up to date.
- Training being organised for Scheme Managers.
- Poor performance in a minority of cases being addressed by supervision.

3.3.0 Empty Property Turnaround Time

Indicator	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Quarter 2 10/11	Targets	
				10/11	11/12
BV212 - average re-let times in days (all properties)	25.5	16	16	24	22
General needs	23	15	15	24	22
Sheltered	38	22	24	24	-

3.3.1 Performance for this quarter on empty property turnaround is 16 days.

3.3.2 From the beginning of November, the Lettings Team has begun monthly meetings with the Mears Empty Properties Team. Progress in relation to these meetings will be reported on in the Quarter 3 report.

3.4.0 Repairs and Improvements – Performance Quarter 2

Repairs and Improvements Performance	End of Year Performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Quarter 2 10/11	Targets
				10/11
Emergency repairs completed in time	98.4%	98.3%	98.7%	97%
No. of emergency repairs completed	5,418	1,539	1,572	N/A
Urgent repairs completed in time	97.6%	91.4%	97.8%	97%
No. of urgent repairs completed	4,336	1,866	1,934	N/A
Routine repairs completed within target	98.9%	99.9%	99.9%	97%
No. of routine repairs completed	21,121	3,314	3,613	N/A
BV72 - Right to Repair orders completed within target	98.3%	98.46 %	98.8%	97%
BV73 - Average time to complete routine repairs	12 days	8 days	7 days	15 days

Repairs and Improvements Performance	End of Year Performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Quarter 2 10/11	Targets 10/11
	RR5 - % of appointments kept	99.8%	92.96%	96.8%
NI158 - % of council homes that are non-decent	39.48%	36.9%	33.35%	26% (11/12 12%)
BV63 - Energy efficiency (SAP rating)	75.9	76.3	76.4	76.7
LPI G3 - Citywide % of stock with up to date gas safety certificates	99.68%	99.64%	99.76%	100%
Mears area	99.74%	99.6%	99.78%	100%
PH Jones area	99.61%	99.7%	99.74%	100%

3.5.1 Responsive repairs

The new 10 year partnership with Mears Group continued to deliver a good level of performance for Quarter 2 with most repairs being completed to target and the average time taken to complete routine repairs being reduced to seven days. All of the performance targets for the responsive repairs service were met in this second quarter.

The second quarter has also seen significant improvements in the completion of urgent repairs with 97.8% of repairs completed within target time, an improvement of over 6% from the first quarter of this year.

So far this year a total of 13,838 repairs have been completed and Mears have contacted 2,556 residents to survey them about the service. 2,556 or 96.5% of residents contacted were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service. These surveys have also provided the partnership with valuable information about how operatives treated residents and their homes and whether work areas were left clean and tidy.

3.5.2 Decent Homes and SAP (energy efficiency rating)

Over the first six months the Repairs and Improvement Partnership with Mears has delivered a 6.13% improvement in decent homes which means that 66.7% or 8,198 of 12,300 properties now meet the Decent Homes Standard. The improvement in the number of homes in September was the biggest this year and the initial result for October delivers a further significant improvement in decency.

During the first six months 225 new kitchens and 101 new bathrooms have been fitted in resident's homes. The door installation programme has seen 306 new front doors installed and 316 new boilers have been fitted.

The partnership has also made improvements to communication with residents such as giving regular estate based updates, providing residents with fact sheets about kitchen and bathroom installations and publishing information about the programme in "Homing In".

There has also been an increase in the energy efficiency of properties through boiler replacements and insulation resulting in a SAP rating of 76.4, a small increase on the previous quarter.

3.5.3 Gas servicing

Performance on gas servicing remains a strong area of performance for the council, Mears and PH Jones. At the end of the second quarter of 2010/11 99.76% of properties had a current gas safety certificate which is the best performance this year and means that just 26 properties have an overdue certificate, a reduction of eight on the first quarter. There are no properties with safety checks of more than one year overdue.

3.6.0 Estates Service

Indicator	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Quarter 2 10/11	Targets
				10/11
Completion of cleaning tasks	92%	Not reporting	89%	98.5%
Bulk refuse removal Targets met within timescale	Emergency 98.6%	Emergency 100%	Emergency 100%	Emergency 100%
	Routine 97.3%	Routine 99%	Routine 98.6%	Routine 96%
Graffiti removal Targets met within timescale	Emergency 84.3%	Emergency 92%	Emergency 100%	Emergency 100%
	Routine 75.6%	Routine 93%	Routine 95.9%	Routine 96%

3.6.1 We no longer count cleaning tasks completed as a measure of our performance, quality checks by our managers and customer satisfaction form a more robust framework to ensure that we deliver the quality of cleaning and estates services set out in our Service Pledges rather than focus on task completion without emphasis on quality.

3.6.2 We are also using the Housemark Performance Framework monitoring and have recently completed a benchmarking day with Crawley Homes, Crawley residents, Estates Service staff and the Estates Service Monitoring group.

3.6.3 We consulted on our cleaning standards with our resident and tenant groups during August and September and received positive feedback and comments regarding the information that will be displayed in all the blocks and areas that Estates Services clean communally. The new cleaning standards will focus on defining specific cleaning tasks and the day in which they should be completed with the name of the specific estate cleaner. Our cleaning team will sign and date the information displayed to demonstrate that cleaning has been completed to our agreed standard. We aim to have this information in all of our 924 areas by the end of December 2010.

3.6.4 This quarter the cleaning has not met our targets. This is in part due to unexpected staffing issues. In light of this the Estates Services has developed and is implementing a service improvement plan which will include more

frequent inspections. Monitoring of the cleaning standards will also be reintroduced to Estates Services Monitoring Group

3.6.5 The Neighbourhood Response Team has had increased demand on their service during this quarter. There has been an increase in the amount of bulk refuse removal requests as a result of the common way clearances in line with our fire access policy. We have cleared a majority of our high rise and medium rise blocks, removing obstructions in conjunction with each local housing office

3.6.6 We have nevertheless exceeded our bulk refuse targets in the second quarter this year and continue to adopt a more planned and targeted approach to this issue, working with each housing office on prevention and enforcement measures.

3.6.7 Graffiti reports have increased by nearly 25% this quarter (from 96 reports to 118) having made 100% performance for the 74 jobs requiring attendance within 24 hours. However, our routine performance target has not been met. Although we attended site within our seven day target the amount of graffiti that required clearance took a number of visits to complete which resulted in repeat reporting.

3.7.0 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

3.7.1. In the Quarter 1 report to HMCC, the Turning the Tide project reported on the increased activity in the pilot area (Moulseccomb, Bevendean, Coldean, Bates Estate and Saunders Park) and citywide approach to address anti-social behaviour. By employing an additional Anti-social Behaviour Housing Officer the project now has the scope to address the current high profile cases citywide. This has been reflected in the increase of workload within Quarter 2.

3.7.2 The current number of high profile cases has risen by six since from the previous quarter and the number of cases that have been closed has increased by seven during the quarter. The remedies employed to address issues of anti-social behaviour include the use of prompt and clear enforcement measures, support and diversionary measures and close multi-agency intervention.

Current high profile ASB cases	Number of new cases	Number of Notices of Seeking Possession served	Number of evictions	Number of closed cases
54	23	4	2	17

3.7.3 In the previous meeting, HMCC discussed the prospect of placing emphasis on effective outcomes through satisfaction surveys in order to determine the success of the project. By comparison, the first quarter 2010/11 report reflected that out of the 60 victims and witnesses interviewed, 65% were either very or fairly satisfied although 15% were found to be dissatisfied with the overall management of their case. The second quarter however, demonstrated

a marked improvement in that of the 56 victims and witnesses interviewed, 90% were either very or fairly satisfied with only 5% dissatisfied.

- 3.7.4 The marked improvement reflects the refocusing of ASB work under the Turning the Tide pilot and work undertaken by the team in developing enhanced service standards for victims and witnesses who are at higher risk because of their personal circumstances or the facts of the case.
- 3.7.5 The project recognises that satisfaction rates will vary from case to case and therefore we are currently exploring reasons as to why and how improved satisfaction levels may be achieved.
- 3.7.6 The Turning the Tide pilot continues to develop performance indicators through consulting both locally and with HouseMark members.
- 3.7.7 In addition to the above, suggestions from HMCC members in relation to information on ASB performance are welcomed.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 At the September meeting of the HMCC the resident involvement strategy and the recommendations of the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group were approved; these include the creation of a tenant-led working group focusing on involving residents in monitoring and scrutinising performance in delivering housing service. The work of this group will be central to the future evolution of this performance report.
- 4.2 Members of the HMCC will be kept informed on the work of this group.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

Although there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, changes in most performance areas will have a financial implication. An example of this would be that improved Empty Property turn around times would result in increased rental income during the year. Any financial implications affected by performance are included in the Housing Revenue Account Targeted Budget Management report, which is reported quarterly to Cabinet.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen Date: 22 November 2010

5.2 Legal Implications:

There are no significant legal or Human Rights Act implications arising from the report.

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 18 November 2010

5.3 Equalities Implications:

These are contained in the body of the report, where appropriate.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report or its publication. Relevant comments are made within the body, where appropriate.

5.5 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

There are no direct risk and opportunity management implications arising directly from this report. Relevant comments are made within the body, where appropriate.

5.6 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

The performance report takes account of corporate priorities, in particular, reducing inequality by increasing opportunity and fair enforcement of the law.

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

