

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 98

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Housing Management Performance Report (Quarter 3)
Date of Meeting: 7 March 2011
Report of: Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise
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Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This is the Quarter 3 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 2 10/11	Quarter 3 10/11	Targets	
				10/11	11/12
BV66a - Rent Collection	98.29%	98.5%	98.49%	98.68%	98.86%
BV66a - Rent Collection (Central housing area)	98.32%	98.51%	98.46%	99.03%	99.24%
BV66a - Rent Collection (East housing area)	98.00%	98.27%	98.29%	98.13%	98.25%
BV66a - Rent Collection (North housing area)	98.47%	98.72%	98.68%	98.82%	98.96%
BV66a - Rent Collection (West housing area)	98.47%	98.6%	98.57%	99.12%	99.32%
BV66a - Rent Collection (Temp. Accom.)	98.65%	89.88%	92.33%	96.95%	Not set
BV66b - Those with arrears of more than seven weeks	4.91%	4.05%	3.87%	4.13%	3.72%
BV66c - The NOSP figure	26.97%	15.4%	21.50%	23.80%	22.39%
BV66d - The eviction figure (% tenants evicted for rent arrears)	0.12%	0.09%	0.19%	less than 35 evictions per annum: 0.29%	
% rent lost due to voids	2.05%	2.12%	2.12%	To be set	
Total former tenant arrears (exclusive of Temporary Accom.)	£780,280	£603,827	£602,728	£650,000	£625,000
% Collection rate for former tenant arrears	22.88%	33.46%	37.54%	20%	20%
% of Write-offs for former tenant arrears	9.30%	32.96%	36.68%	40%	
Total recharge debt	£190,138	£195,483	£188,043	£272,110	
% Collection rate for recharges	19.63%	21.06%	24.59%	20%	
% Leaseholders' service charge collection rate	84%	68%	80%	85%	Not set
% Leaseholders collection rate on recoverable arrears	92%	Collected annually	Collected annually	92%	Not set

3.1.1 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

BVPI66a

The collection rate forecast at the end of December 2010 was 98.49% compared to 98.05% at the end of Quarter 3 2009/10. Since December 2009 rent arrears have reduced by £176,926. Although the collection rate dropped slightly over the Christmas period, the arrears increase was only £29,358 compared to £109,503 the previous year.

BVPI66b

The trend for this indicator continues downward. At the end of Quarter 3 2010/11 the number of tenants with more than seven weeks rent arrears was 388 (3.87%) compared to 510 (4.98%) at the end of Quarter 3 2009/10

BVPI66c

Up to the end of December 2010 the number of tenants served with a Notice of Seeking Possession (Nosp) was 573.

BVPI66d

Rent arrears evictions so far this year total 23 (0.19%).

3.1.2 Former Tenant Arrears

Former tenant arrears have reduced by £71,759 since the end of Quarter 1 2010/11 and the collection rate has increased to 37.54%.

3.1.3 Recharges

Between April & December 2010 there were 131 new recharge cases with a recharge value of £78,648. This brings the total number of recharge cases to 356 making the average recharge debt £528. i.e. £188,043 divided by 356

3.1.4 Percentage leaseholder recovery rate on gross debt

3.1.5 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. The 80% rate reported for Quarter 3 can be compared to 77% for the same quarter last year.

3.1.6 Percentage leaseholder recoverable arrears

3.1.7 This, annually calculated figure, 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
- Amounts where legal recovery action is being taken

3.2.0 Sheltered Housing – Service Developments

- 3.2.1 All sheltered housing schemes in Brighton and Hove have been awarded the Elderly Accommodation Counsel ‘Quality of Information’ mark. This is the first time that all schemes have been awarded this mark.
- 3.2.2 Changes to the system of payments from Supporting People, have enabled the service to make advances in the way residents’ accounts are set out. This development has brought about a simplification in the charging system enabling a better understanding, for residents.
- 3.2.3 The service has been participating in a number of national schemes to ensure that residents have a range of options in activities and the opportunity to develop new skills. In one example, participation in the South East Supported Housing Month, two special events took place. The first, at Somerset Point, introduced and developed residents’ skills for line dancing, while at Elwyn Jones Court tenants were given the opportunity to try tai-chi. In addition, the service publicised the option of sheltered housing at the Hangleton and Knoll Older People’s Day. There are plans to continue offering and developing recreational activities and opportunities across the whole service.
- 3.2.4 In a further development the sheltered housing service has been seeking to work more closely with other organisations. For example partnership protocols have been agreed with the Alzheimer’s Society, Community Transport Ltd and Age Concern’s Information & Advice service. There have also been open information sessions with service users at The Carers Centre and to staff at the YMCA.

3.3.0 Empty Property Turnaround Time

Indicator	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 2 10/11	Quarter 3 10/11	Targets	
				10/11	11/12
BV212 - average re-let times in days (all properties)	25.5	16	20	24	22
General needs	23	15	16	24	22
Sheltered	38	24	46	24	-

- 3.3.1 For this quarter the turnaround time was 20 days, although an increase over the previous month, the figure remained well inside target.
- 3.3.2 Performance for this quarter on empty property turnaround is 20 days, an increase of four days on the previous quarter. Overall performance is still being impacted by the sheltered Local Lettings Plan and as a result during the last

quarter five properties were let in excess of 50 days. Of these, three exceeded 100 days and one over 200 days. However the turn around time is still four days under target and at the same time last year it was two days under target.

3.3.3 From the beginning of November, the Lettings Team has begun monthly meetings with the Mears Empty Properties Team.

The meetings have been around seeking solutions on the following:

- day to day issues
- clarifying and changing processes in order to streamline and work more efficiently
- ensuring repairs target dates were challenging and that properties were only empty for the minimum amount of time
- minimising carpet removal and agreeing that if adaptations needed replacing
- how customer service can be improved and how to ensure that both teams are aware of the impact our work has on the customer.

Both teams agree that monthly meetings are helpful in improving the service provided.

3.4.0 Repairs and Improvements

Repairs and Improvements Performance	End of Year Performance 09/10	Quarter 2 10/11	Quarter 3 10/11	Targets
				10/11
Emergency repairs completed in time	98.4%	98.7%	98.01%	97%
No. of emergency repairs completed	5,418	1,572	1,855	N/A
Urgent repairs completed in time	97.6%	97.8%	95.57%	97%
No. of urgent repairs completed	4,336	1,934	2,757	N/A
Routine repairs completed within target time	98.9%	99.9%	98.07%	97%
No. of routine repairs completed	21,121	3,613	5,235	N/A
BV72 - Right to Repair orders completed within target time	98.3%	98.8%	97.04%	97%
BV73 - Average time to complete routine repairs	12 days	7 days	11 days	15 days
RR5 - % of appointments kept	99.8%	96.8%	95.48%	95%
NI158 - % of council homes that are non-decent	39.48%	33.35%	29.70%	26% (11/12 12%)
BV63 - Energy efficiency (SAP rating)	75.90	76.40	76.50	76.70
LPI G3 - Citywide % of stock with up to date gas safety certificates	99.68%	99.76%	99.74%	100%
Mears area	99.74%	99.78%	99.59%	100%
PH Jones area	99.61%	99.74%	99.96%	100%

3.4.1 Responsive repairs

Under the new 10 year partnership with the Mears Group most repairs are being completed within target times and on average routine repairs are completed within 11 days.

The responsive repairs team are currently forecast to meet all of the targets for this year. 'Urgent repairs completed' was slightly below the target in quarter three but improved considerably in December and is anticipated to continue at a good level of performance for the rest of the year.

Performance is reviewed with residents at the monthly Core Group meeting which includes detailed information on customer surveys and results of mystery shopping exercises. So far this year 19,633 repairs have been completed and Mears have contacted 3,512 residents to get feedback about the service. From these surveys 97% of residents have been either satisfied or very satisfied with the works carried out.

Resident feedback has highlighted that in some cases ID cards are not being shown by operatives and the partnership is working to ensure that this is improved over the coming months.

3.4.2 Decent Homes and SAP (energy efficiency rating)

The Property & Investment team has continued to deliver improvements in the level of Decent Homes over the last quarter. So far this year the level of Decent Homes has improved by nearly 10% which represents about 1,200 homes.

This year to date, 451 new kitchens and 156 bathrooms have been fitted in resident's homes. The door programme has also seen 826 new doors fitted.

Further works are being undertaken in the last quarter of 2010/11 and year two of the three year investment plan is currently being updated with initial surveys to be undertaken with Mears in February and March.

3.4.3 Gas servicing

Gas servicing continues to be a strong area of performance and it is expected that the year end figure will improve on the high level set last year. At the end of quarter three there were 28 properties with an overdue service.

3.5.0 Estates Service

Indicator	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 2 10/11	Quarter 3 10/11	Targets
				10/11
Completion of cleaning tasks	92%	89%	89%	98.5%
Bulk refuse removal	Emergency 98.6%	Emergency 100%	Emergency 100%	100%
Targets met within timescale	Routine 97.3%	Routine 98.6%	Routine 100%	96%
Graffiti removal	Emergency 84.3%	Emergency 100%	Emergency 100%	100%
Targets met within timescale	Routine 75.6%	Routine 95.9%	Routine 91%	96%
Lights	New performance measures Quarter 3	New performance measures Quarter 3	Emergency 100%	100%
Targets met within timescale			Routine 97.8%	96%
Neighbourhood Response Team	New performance measures Quarter 3	New performance measures Quarter 3	1,703 jobs completed	To be advised

3.5.1 Performance levels, in December, were affected by the severe weather and consequent disruption to the service. To minimise this in future a service level agreement with Cityclean is being developed to provide mutual cover if needed in order to maximise continuity of service.

3.5.2 A widened role within the Neighbourhood Response Team has been taken on. New work includes carrying out city wide emergency light checks, visiting an average of 35 blocks per day to achieve our monthly checks.

3.5.3 The Neighbourhood Response Team has also taken on a new role as Trusted Assessors. This involves the team in making assessments for those tenants in need of additional support. The team has received the relevant training and will also be the first point of contact for those requesting simple minor adaptations to help them in their home. It is anticipated that the consequent waiting time for relevant assistance will be reduced.

3.5.4 During the recent bad weather staff were re-focussed on snow clearance and gritting. During this period 50 grit bins were moved to different locations around the city and 1000 bags of grit have been provided for bins and to blocks of flats on HRA land.

- 3.5.5 A severe weather contingency plan for our 57 staff was piloted during the recent bad weather. This led to the efficient relocation of those staff able to get to work and the allocation of alternative tasks according to need.
- 3.5.6 In addition, cleaning staff were deployed to gritting entrances and paths around many housing blocks to ensure the safety of residents. This included clearance of snow around sheltered scheme sites.
- 3.5.7 A service improvement plan has been developed to ensure that cleaning standards are brought up to the same level across the city and that they are maintained. Team Managers are spending more time monitoring the quality of cleaning and carrying out random checks. Cleaning standards will be monitored through the Estates Services Monitoring Group.
- 3.5.8 During January and February 2011 new cleaning standards will be put into 724 blocks. These have already been piloted in a number of areas where we have consulted with residents groups and residents associations. Each cleaner will sign and date a form as the block is cleaned and the information displayed will demonstrate that the cleaning has been completed to standard. Residents will have the opportunity to feedback on quality, frequency and performance. There will then be the opportunity to amend priorities according to local experience.
- 3.5.9 Two new performance indicators have been included in this report (replacing light bulbs and jobs completed by the Neighbourhood Response team). Further information about new indicators will be given in the Quarter 4 report.

3.6.0 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

3.6.1 The number of referrals and high profile cases for Quarter 3 remains consistent with Quarter 2. We have successfully resolved 10 cases without having to resort to enforcement action.

- There have been no evictions this quarter.

Current high profile ASB cases	Number of new cases	Number of Notices of Seeking Possession served	Number of evictions	Number of closed cases
67	23	4	0	10

3.6.2 The ASB Focus Group is meeting regularly and setting objectives for service improvement.

3.6.3 The enhanced service standards for victims and witnesses of ASB have been completed and were in place from October 2010. The new service identifies vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk because of their personal

circumstances and ensures that the council provides appropriate and individually focussed support. Informal assessment of the effectiveness of the new standards indicates that there is a high degree of customer satisfaction and that they are viewed as a significant service improvement.

3.6.4 At the end of Quarter 2 Antisocial Behaviour Housing Officers took on case management of Housing Officers low and medium level cases city wide providing advice and direction. The development has strengthened the link between the specialist ASB team and district office housing teams. It will help to emphasise the assertive approach developed under the Turning the Tide and increase the focus on early interventions.

3.6.5 Satisfaction figures for Quarter 3 are incomplete. The interim findings, for quarter three show that the majority of the victims and witnesses interviewed, were either very or fairly satisfied. A more comprehensive report will be available at the end of Quarter 4.

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. This group has met and is continuing its work. The other three working groups, established around specific objectives, are also meeting regularly supported by a Community Participation Officer. The work of all these groups will be brought back to HMCC later in the year following coordination by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Most performance measures discussed in this report have financial implications and these are included in the monthly financial monitoring reports. An example is the improvement in the rent collection and arrears management over the past two years, which has contributed to a saving in the HRA Budget 2010/11 for the bad debt provision requirement. Another example is any improvement in turnaround times or a reduction in empty property numbers 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: Susie Allen *Date:* 9 February 2011

5.2 Legal Implications:

As this is a regular report to Committee, there are no new significant legal or Human Rights Act implications to draw to Members' attention.

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley *Date:* 10 February 2011

5.3 Equalities Implications:

Equalities implications are included within the body of the report.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

Sustainability implications are included within the body of the report.

5.5 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

There are no direct risk and opportunity management implications arising from this report

5.6 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

There are no direct Corporate or Citywide implications arising from this report.

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