



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

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| Report for: | Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee |
| Date of meeting: | 18th June 2014 |
| PART: | 1 |
| If Part II, reason: | |

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| Title of report: | 2013/14 Quarter 4/End of Year Performance Report, Service Plan & Risk Register - Housing |
| Contact: | Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Author/Responsible Officer – Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director - Housing |
| Purpose of report: | 1. To Update the Committee on the Performance of the Housing Service for the 4 th Quarter / End of Year 2013/14 2. To inform the Committee of the status of the current Housing Service Risk Register |
| Recommendations | 1. That the Committee note the Performance Report & Risk Register. |
| Corporate objectives: | Affordable Housing |
| Implications: | <u>Financial</u> |
| 'Value For Money Implications' | All areas of the service are subject to Monthly Budget Monitoring Meetings with Financial Accountant. Budget Reporting is quarterly to the Committee and 6 monthly to Tenants & Leaseholders Committee. <u>Value for Money</u> The Housing Service & its costs are reviewed annually through a national benchmarking organisation (Housemark) |

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| Risk Implications | Appendix – Housing Operational Risk Register |
| Equalities Implications | Equality Impact Assessments are carried out when policies or procedures are amended as appropriate |
| Health And Safety Implications | Health & Safety is an identified key risk for the Housing Service. |
| Consultees: | Andy Vincent – Group Manager Tenants & Leaseholders Fiona Williamson – Group Manager Property & Place Julia Hedger – Group Manager Strategic Housing |
| Background papers: | n/a |
| Historical background (<i>please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context</i>). | Each year, in consultation with staff and members of the Tenants & Leaseholder Committee a set of performance indicators, and key Service Plan Objectives are identified and agreed. |
| Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report: | TLC – Tenants & Leaseholder Committee HRA – Housing Revenue Account |

1.0 Introduction

This report details the performance of the Housing Service during the 4th quarter and end of year position of 2013/14 against performance indicators and progress against the Housing Service Plan 2013/14

The report also details the Housing Operational Risk Register. These risks have been identified as key in terms of tracking and ensuring all is done to mitigate as far as is reasonably possible.

2.0 Housing Performance Report – 2013/14

Appendix 1 shows performance against the ‘Service Critical’ performance indicators for 2013/14

2.1 Performance slippage / behind target

PP09a, PP16a (Appendix 1 pages 4 & 2)

Management of the Council's empty homes remains a challenge. Whilst performance has greatly improved since a few years ago, it has stagnated and getting to the next level is proving difficult. Up until recently 3 different teams had responsibility for elements of the process, as well as external contractors.

We are currently in the process of setting up an Empty Homes Team – within Strategic Housing and to work directly alongside the Allocations team under the same Team Leader. Targets have remained the same for 2014/15 in this area however the tolerance has been reviewed.

This should ensure ownership, cohesive working and a single point of responsibility.

2.2 Performance Highlights

PP01 & PP08 – (Appendix 1 page 1)

The Council awarded Sunrealm the contract for gas servicing and installations in October 2013, following the termination of the Carillion contract and an interim arrangement with Orion Heating.

Performance in terms of gas safety certificate compliance and tenant satisfaction has remained high during both the interim period with Orion Heating and the first 6 months of the new Sunrealm contract. There has been a strict structure of contract management implemented by DBC officers from both a financial and operational perspective.

TL01, TL02 & TL04 – (Appendix 1 page 6)

Due to the currently still uncertain financial climate, welfare reform impact and the gradual reduction in most people's real terms income the collection of rental income is becoming more of a challenge for social landlords.

A decision was taken towards the end of 2012/13 to increase resources in the Housing Income Team. Self-Financing means that the collection of rent is vital in terms of the viability of the Council's HRA Business Plan. Two officers were recruited to work as financial inclusion officers with their focus on ensuring tenants have access to appropriate benefit, financial advice and early support for new tenants.

The results have proved value for money and the collection rates and rates of debt compare favourably with many other authorities. Early unofficial 'benchmarking' has been carried out.

SH09B SH10 & SH11 – (Appendix 1 page 5)

Over the past year there has been a lot of change in the Strategic Housing Team with the emphasis on customer focus, housing advice at the earliest opportunity and a new Homelessness Strategy. There has also been a restructure to ensure that the resources are focused on the areas of highest priority such as the prevention of homelessness and ensuring all officers can give full comprehensive advice when there is a threat of homelessness.

The performance in this area suggests that the work in the service area is paying dividend.

3.0 2014/15 Performance Indicators

The majority of Performance Indicators have remained the same for 2014/15 however there will be some changes within those relating to the new Total Asset Management Contract once it starts 1st July. Those will be reflected from quarter 2 onwards.

Members of the Housing Maintenance & Environment Committee (HMEC) will be working with officers and the new contractor, Osborne to agree these and how they will be monitored.

4.0 Housing Service Plan

Dacorum Borough Council Housing Service Plan 2013/14

The Service Plan captures the key improvements or pieces of work to be delivered this year. It identifies how and when they will be done and who will be responsible. Below is a table summarising the progress of each element as at 31st March 2014.

| | <i>What will be different once this work is done</i> | <i>Project Lead & Target Completion</i> | <i>March 14 Update</i> |
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| Asset Management Strategy | <i>We will develop a long term plan which will detail how we expect to invest in Dacorum Borough Council owned homes, sheltered schemes, footpaths and drying areas over the next 10 years.</i> | <i>Asset Team Leader September 2013</i> | <i>Due to the new Total Asset Management contract starting in July 2014 it has been agreed to defer the new Strategy so that the new contractor can have input and add expertise – It is envisaged that the strategy will be completed by the end of the second quarter of 2014/15.</i> |

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| | | | <i>It will be taken to both TLC & Housing & Communities OSC</i> |
| <i>Energy Strategy</i> | <p><i>We will utilise grants where available to introduce renewable technologies and help improve the energy efficiency of Dacorum Borough Council owned homes, sheltered schemes and blocks of flats.</i></p> <p><i>We will also ensure that when we undertake work to improve Dacorum Borough Council owned homes, such as planned improvement programmes, that we seek to improve their energy efficiency.</i></p> | <p><i>Asset Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>December 2013</i></p> | <p><i>A lack of certainty relating to funding and central government initiatives (ECO / Green Deal) have meant that the strategy has not progressed as planned.</i></p> <p><i>The work will continue alongside that of the Asset Management Strategy</i></p> <p><i>The principles of the strategy will be taken for comment to Housing & Communities OSC and TLC during the first quarter of 2014/15</i></p> |
| <i>Digital access</i> | <p><i>We will improve the number of people who have access to the internet; by:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Installing internet enabled computer terminals in each of our sheltered schemes</i> <i>• Working with Community Centres to install additional internet enabled computer terminals</i> <i>• Develop a training course to enable tenants to develop their IT skills</i> | <p><i>Income Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>March 2014</i></p> | <p><i>This is now a corporate project and being led by Assistant Director for Project Governance</i></p> <p><i>A housing specific task of WIFI enabling sheltered communal areas has now been initiated</i></p> <p><i>We have undertaken a market appraisal of WIFI installers/providers and have</i></p> |

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| | | | <i>commissioned TalkTalk to install and provide WIFI installations in our sheltered schemes. This work is due for completion in May 2014</i> |
| <i>Homelessness - prevention and developing a new Homelessness Strategy</i> | <p><i>We want to help prevent households from becoming homeless. Our Housing Advice Team already provides services to help households from becoming homeless. During 2013/14 we will:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop working with the local prison to ensure that when inmates finish their term that they have access to suitable accommodation.</i> • <i>Employ Welfare and Budget Advisors to help residents with the impact of the on-going economic difficulties and the introduction of changes to welfare benefits.</i> • <i>Adopt a Homelessness Strategy that will set long-term strategic objectives with a clear action plan for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Preventing homelessness,</i> ➤ <i>Improving temporary housing options, and</i> ➤ <i>Focusing on suitable and well-managed resettlement into more secure accommodation</i> | <p><i>Homelessness and Housing Advice Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>December 2013</i></p> | <p><i>Advice surgeries at the Prison started in September 2013 and will be bi-monthly as agreed with the Prison. Once evaluated they may increase to monthly.</i></p> <p><i>Welfare and Budget Advisors have been recruited – now have 3 support officers within the team</i></p> <p><i>Homelessness Strategy adopted by Cabinet Nov 2013</i></p> |
| <i>Developing</i> | <i>We want to develop and</i> | <i>Strategy &</i> | <i>Help to Rent</i> |

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| <p><i>the Private Rent Sector</i></p> | <p><i>run a Local Lettings Agency to improve and expand the current Deposit Guarantee Scheme. The aims of this work will be to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increase the number of local landlords working with the Council;</i> • <i>Provide more housing options to low income and vulnerable households;</i> • <i>Develop a modern, professional service with a good local reputation; and</i> • <i>Generate income to cover costs (remaining competitive over private agencies).</i> | <p><i>Private Sector Housing Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>December 2013</i></p> | <p><i>scheme launched on 21st October aimed at meeting service plan targets for this area.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Developing the Housing Options service</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop a new Enhanced Housing Options module on the Moving with Dacorum website which identifies the options available to a household when seeking alternative accommodation.</i> • <i>We will also provide more details on the website including developing a user guide and information leaflets on topics such as About Housing in Dacorum.</i> | <p><i>Housing Options Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>December 2013</i></p> | <p><i>Enhanced Housing Options module went live with the new Allocations Policy as planned on the 7th November. DBC website updated and pages went live on 30th October</i></p> <p><i>Members Training on new Allocations Policy 31st October</i></p> |
| <p><i>We will utilise the feedback we receive to improve the quality of the services we provide.</i></p> <p><i>(affects tenants,</i></p> | <p><i>We receive feedback in the form of satisfaction survey responses, complaints, comments at involvement events and complements.</i></p> <p><i>We will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Delivering an improvement plan developed as a result of</i> | <p><i>Policy and Participation Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>March 2014</i></p> <p><i>(On Target)</i></p> | <p><i>This work is well underway:-</i></p> <p><i>We have developed a STAR improvement plan following the 2012 survey</i></p> <p><i>Published an annual report</i></p> |

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| <p>leaseholders and housing applicants)</p> | <p>undertaking the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) and publish progress within News and Views and our Annual Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish information on the themes that people are complaining about • Ensure that our 'Local Offers' continue to reflect our tenants priorities • Review how affective our satisfaction surveys are in capturing the views of our tenants <p>We will use this information to review our policies and procedures and enhance the information that we provide to service users.</p> | | <p>Reviewed our Local Offers</p> <p>We are currently reviewing how our satisfaction data is captured – further work is likely after this review is concluded</p> <p>2014 STAR survey-data being reviewed which will inform the 2014 – 16 Housing Service Plan</p> |
| <p>Leasehold service review</p> | <p>Review the service that leaseholders receive; by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing the service that leaseholders in Dacorum receive with other leaseholders across the county • Asking leaseholders' their view of the quality and costs associated with their existing service • Ensuring that all processes associated with providing services to leaseholders are as efficient as possible | <p>Leasehold Team Leader</p> <p>December 2013</p> | <p>A report finalising the leaseholder review is due to be completed by the end of April 2014.</p> <p>This will consider satisfaction levels in comparison with other social landlords, service charge collection performance and costs and income for the service. The report will be considered by HSMT – Housing Senior Management Team and the Portfolio Holder for Housing prior to being presented to the TLC</p> |

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| <p><i>Older Persons Strategy</i></p> <p><i>(affects tenants, leaseholders, housing applicants and residents across the borough)</i></p> | <p><i>We will look at the housing, support, care and health services available to older people across the borough.</i></p> <p><i>This work will seek to understand how well these services are working together and what is needed to be done to improve the co-ordination of these services over the next 10 years.</i></p> <p><i>We will also identify whether there is sufficient provision of services for older people within the borough; whether new services are required or some are existing services are surplus to requirements.</i></p> <p><i>A new Older Persons Strategy will be developed and adopted by the Council.</i></p> | <p><i>Strategy & Private Sector Housing Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>March 2014</i></p> <p><i>(On Target)</i></p> | <p><i>Older Persons Strategy adopted by Cabinet January 2014</i></p> |
| <p><i>Repairs & Maintenance Procurement project delivery</i></p> <p><i>(affects tenants and leaseholders)</i></p> | <p><i>This work is designed to enable us to prepare for the end of our current maintenance contracts – and to ensure that a new contract(s) is in place from the spring of 2014.</i></p> | <p><i>Property and Place Group Manager</i></p> <p><i>July 2014</i></p> | <p><i>Contract award was recommended by the Council's cabinet March 2014</i></p> <p><i>'Call in' period expires 4TH April</i></p> <p><i>Mobilisation of new contract to start April 2014 in advance of July 2014 start of Total Asset Management contract</i></p> |
| <p><i>Vulnerable people</i></p> <p><i>(affects</i></p> | <p><i>We will look at how we deliver services to 'vulnerable people' – for example we may do</i></p> | <p><i>Tenant and Leasehold Group Manager</i></p> | <p><i>A first draft of the strategy will be completed before end of April</i></p> |

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| <p>tenants)</p> | <p><i>certain repair work quicker if a tenant is known to be vulnerable or be able to provide support services to ensure they are able to sustain their tenancy.</i></p> | <p><i>October 2013 (slightly behind)</i></p> | <p><i>The principles in the strategy have been presented to the TLC in March.</i></p> <p><i>Further consultation will be undertaken with the wider tenant population and partner organisations in Spring/Summer 2014</i></p> <p><i>The intention is then to take to TLC / Housing & Communities OSC in the Autumn</i></p> |
| <p><i>Develop phase 2 and 3 of the Council New Build Programme</i></p> | <p><i>We will develop phase 2 & 3 of the Council New Build programme including purchasing land, developing standard of the new homes and confirming the required budgets for the whole programme.</i></p> | <p><i>Housing Development Manager</i></p> <p><i>March 2014</i></p> | <p><i>New Housing Development Strategy adopted by Cabinet in November 2013. This strategy addresses the standards of new homes built. Other land acquisitions with required finances have been approved by Cabinet at several different meetings. HRA Business Plan reviewed in March 2014 to incorporate next phases of new build homes.</i></p> |

5.0 Housing Risk Register

Appendix 2 details the Housing Service Operational Risk Register following the review carried out by the Assistant Director & Group Managers.