

**HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

WEDNESDAY 23 JANUARY 2013 AT 7.30 PM

BULBOURNE ROOM, CIVIC CENTRE, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Adeleke	N Hollinghurst
Adshead	Mahmood (Vice-Chairman)
Bassadone	Marshall (Chairman)
Conway	McLean
Flint	Organ
Hearn	R Sutton

Co-Opted Members: S Parker & M Cook (Substitute)

Substitute Members: Councillors G Chapman, Clark, Rance, White and Wixted

For further information, please contact Trudi Coston on Tel: 01442 228226, or Email: Trudi.Coston@dacorum.gov.uk. Information about the Council can be found on our website: www.dacorum.gov.uk.

Part I

Item	Page
1. Minutes	2
2. Apologies for Absence	2
3. Declarations of Interest	2
4. Public Participation	2
5. Consideration of Any Matter Referred to the Committee in relation to a Call-In	2
6. Quarter Three Performance Report – Resident Services	3
7. Quarter Three Performance Report – Regulatory Services	16
8. Quarter Three Performance Report – Housing Landlord	20
9. Housing Allocations Policy	36
10. Review of Approach to Under Occupation	112
11. Strategic Tenancy Policy	123
12. Exclusion of the Public	145
Appendix A - Work Programme 2012/13	146
Appendix B - Work Programme 2013/14	148

Part II

13. Performance Report on the Gas Servicing Contract	151
--	-----

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 05 December 2012.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a prejudicial interest in a matter, who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered:

(i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, and

(ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must withdraw to the public seating area.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests or the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal interests and prejudicial interest are defined in Part 2 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements or ask questions in accordance with the rules as to public participation

5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO A CALL-IN

None

AGENDA ITEM: 6

SUMMARY



Report for:	Housing and Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	23rd January 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Quarter Three Performance Report – Resident Services
Contact:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Resident and Regulatory Services Author/Responsible Officer, Julie Still, Group Manager – Resident Services
Purpose of report:	(1) Monitoring and information
Recommendations	1) That members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information or reports of specific projects
Corporate objectives:	Safe and Clean Environment Building Community Capacity Dacorum Delivers
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> Within existing budgets <u>Value for Money</u>
'Value For Money Implications'	
Risk Implications	As per Neighbourhood Delivery Service Plan
Equalities Implications	
Health And Safety Implications	

Consultees:	Service Team Leaders, Community Safety Co-ordinator
Background papers:	Service Reports, Police reports, CorVu

Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Quarter 3, 2012 – 2013

1 Introduction

1.1 This is the third quarter performance report for the Residents Services Group which forms part of the wider Neighbourhood Delivery service area and covers the period 1st October 2012 to 31st December 2012.

1.2 The services within this group are: -

2 Neighbourhood Action, Anti-Social Behaviour, Community Safety, The Old Town Hall, Children's Services, Community Cohesion, CCTV, Town Centre Management and Youth Democracy..

2.1 If there are any additional areas or reports for specific areas that members would like to see, please can they inform the Group Manager, Resident Services.

3 Quarter 3 Performance Report – CorVu

3.1 See Appendix A

4 Resident Services - First Quarter Achievements.

4.1 The following achievements are a sample of the projects/work undertaken by this group of services during the last quarter.

5 Community Safety Partnership

5.1 All crime within the borough has reduced by 13% compared to the same period last year which relates to 798 fewer crimes. A full breakdown is provided in Appendix B which shows the details around the Partnership priorities of Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage, Vehicle Crime, Dwelling Burglary, Alcohol Misuse, Drug Misuse and Managing Offenders/Reducing Re-offending.

5.2 Dacorum's continued reduction in reports of crime and disorder increases its performance when compared to similar authorities across England and Wales – it has moved from 6th place to 4th place – appendix C.

6 Anti-Social Behaviour

6.1 Reports of anti-social behaviour continue to reduce with a 28% reduction year to date across the borough as is reflected in the Community Safety report at appendix B

6.2 Enforcement Action taken during last quarter includes the following: -

6.3 One injunction with a power of arrest obtained at County Court and two breaches of the order.

- 6.4 2 Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC's) were signed with young people involved in anti-social behaviour
- 6.5 Possession of a DBC property was granted by the courts of an introductory tenancy due to anti-social behaviour.
- 6.6 Evaluation of the Race and Hate Crime Disability Awareness projects has resulted in an increase of the reporting of incidents of this nature.
- 6.7 The Family Intervention Officer continues to work with challenging families across the borough – During the last quarter intensive work has been targeted at 5 families with a range of interventions and support. This project continues to deliver results and will work alongside the County's new Thriving Families programme which is part of the National Troubled Families agenda.
- 6.8 The Anti-Social Behaviour Bill is now out for further consultation and comment.
- 6.9 In general work has increased in the ASB area during the last quarter and in particular there are more cases reported involving the mental health of individuals which are time consuming and problematic to deal with.

7 Quarter 4 - 2012/13 priorities for ASB: -

- 7.1 Review the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill and draft feedback for Portfolio holders consideration prior to returning to the Home Office
- 7.2 Deliver the Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Days within selected Dacorum schools.

8 Neighbourhood Action

- 8.1 Verge hardening project officer has been appointed to carryout intensive consultation with residents and manage to project delivery. The additional parking areas are expected to be delivered during the summer/autumn of 2013.
- 8.2 Play area improvements will be completed by end of February in (list of areas) and launches will be held during half term and Easter holidays
- 8.3 Christmas lights provided in 5 neighbourhoods – NA groups arranged the 'switch on's' lead by members and attended by MP Mike Penning
- 8.4 Two visitors from Neu Isenburg were hosted by the newly formed Dacorum Town Twinning Association from 11th to 13th October. Neighbourhood Action staff supported with the planning of the visit and developed an itinerary encompassing a variety of activities from local schools, sporting, interfaith, environmental and cultural groups to voluntary sector organisations, businesses and a Civic Tour with the Mayor and MP, Mike Penning.
- 8.5 39 local residents gathered at Gilbert Burnet House for performances from the Youth Action Entertainers. 11 young people attended and performances including guitar, singing, piano and Dacorum Majorettes.
- 8.6 The Kick Racism Out of Football event in Marlowes saw 219 young people take part in Panna Football tournaments. 80 took part in the 'drunk goggles' and DJ mixing sessions run by Youth Connexions and 11 signed up to the 6 week coaching sessions at Sportspace.

This event was delivered in partnership between Dacorum Borough Council, Youth Connexions, Sportspace, Marlowes Shopping Centre, Arsenal Soccer School, Bangladeshi Welfare Association, Global Pindd and Hemel Mosque.

9 Quarter 4 - 2012/13 priorities: -

- 9.1 Progress Verge Hardening project.
- 9.2 Launch Play area improvements – half term and Easter school holidays
- 9.3 Establish sub working groups for delivery Neighbourhood Action areas priorities

10 Children, Young People – Adventure Playgrounds

- 10.1 Numbers of children aged 6 – 12 Years inclusive attending the adventure playgrounds in the last quarter are: - October 5645, November 4243 and December 2518 a total of 12,406 of which over 700 attendances were by children with identified special needs.
- 10.2 Chaulden and Adeyfield Adventure Playgrounds secured £6687 in funding from the Community Safety Partnership to provide skate ramps at both playgrounds, skate boards and scooters, equipment for a film club at Adeyfield, refurbishment of pool tables, and an in ground trampoline.
- 10.3 Parents at Adeyfield raised funding for a wonderful firework display which saw over 300 people (families) attend the playground.
- 10.4 Inventive ways of raising funds continue at all of the Adventure Playgrounds and include cake sales and Phil the Bag as well as the above which provide money for additional events, Christmas parties and small gifts for the children.
- 10.5 The 4 Youth Clubs continue to thrive with numbers continuing to increase and attendance numbers were 1340 for the 3rd quarter. Bennetts End has the lowest attendance with Adeyfield and Chaulden attracting in excess of 60 young people every session.
- 10.6 Each of the Youth Clubs have their own forums made up of the young people who attend and who organise and deliver the programme of entertainment at each club. Examples of events have included Halloween and Christmas Parties and numerous fund raising projects by the young people.
- 10.7 Due to the success of the Dacorum Borough Council Youth Clubs at the Adventure Playgrounds and the high attendance figures, a joint project starts on 14th January 2013 with Youth Connexions who will be delivering their youth services from Adeyfield, Chaulden and Grovehill Adventure playgrounds.

11 Quarter 4 2012/13 Priorities: -

- 11.1 – Complete the review of the structure of Adventure Playground Service
- 11.2 – Support the delivery of the Youth Connexions Service
- 11.3 – Easter programme preparation

12 Youth Democracy

- 12.1 Dacorum Youth Forum meetings took place on 1, 8, 9 Oct & 13 Nov and there were many additional subgroup meetings for the preparation of the presentation for European Local Democracy Week.
- 12.2 The group have also designed a poster for recruitment of additional members in January 2013.
- 12.3 Neighbourhood Action staff developed and ran interactive sessions about the Human Rights of the Child for European Local Democracy Week in October.
- 12.4 Participants were then invited to take part in the art democracy competition. 15 young people from Global Pindd and 36 from Hemel Islamic Academy took part in the sessions.
- 12.5 6 Schools and 2 Community Groups took part in the Rights of the Child Art Competition – over 270 children. Schools were given a resource pack which had information, worksheets and interactive sessions on 'Democracy' and the 'Human Rights of the Child' and 48 people attended the resulting exhibition and Cllr Harden spoke about local democracy.
- 12.6 Dacorum Youth Forum and the Youth Action Entertainers presented to the young people involved in the competition and their families about the opportunities that are available for them in the future. Prize winners from the competition were awarded their certificates by the Mayor. The winners also attended the Houses of Parliament with local MP's David Gauke and Mike Penning.
- 12.7 Students from Cavendish and Hemel Hempstead schools designed publicity for Neighbourhood Action Groups and during Local Democracy week were taken to a local designers and printers. The students worked on an interactive session with designers to produce a design for Neighbourhood Action publicity.

13 Quarter 4 priorities

- 13.1 Increase membership of Youth Forum
- 13.2 Deliver more Youth Action Entertainers events

14 CCTV and Town Centre

- 14.1 Halloween Event delivered successfully in partnership with Community Action Dacorum and well attended despite poor weather.
- 14.2 Christmas Light infrastructure replaced and light switch on with firework display in partnership with the Marlowes Centre was well attended.
- 14.3 The CCTV control room managed 431 separate incidents during the second quarter of this year. There were 84 arrests directly involving the CCTV control room, 87 calls regarding lost, found or stray dogs and 242 visitors to the CCTV control room.
- 14.4 There were 132 DVD's were provided for evidential purposes to Hertfordshire Constabulary and CCTV were involved in searches for 11 missing persons under the age of 16 and 11 for persons aged 16 or over.

- 14.5 Works to upgrade and relocate the CCTV control room are advanced, planning permission has been granted for the mast at Cupid Green and the new control centre is underway.

15 Quarter 4, 2012/13 priorities: -

- 15.1 Complete CCTV upgrade project
15.2 Implement new procedures for CCTV
15.3 Review Town Centre Events

16 Old Town Hall

- 16.1 As per the performance indicators we achieved 58% sales in this reporting period which is an improvement on the previous quarter.
- 16.2 Highlights of the sell-out comedy programme of nationally renowned comedians were, Harry Hill, Tom Stade, and Lee Hurst.
- 16.3 The film programme has been received very well with a high level of interest from customers – we will be extending the film programme next season.
- 16.4 Part of our film season included ‘Journey to Mecca with Ibn Battuta’ – this formed the backdrop to a week-long festival, supported by Global Pinnd – including displays, exhibits and speakers on the Hajj pilgrimage.
- 16.5 A hugely successful animation workshop ran over the October Half Term. Feedback was very positive and we would look to run something similar in the near future.
- 16.6 The Old Town Hall Phase 2 realignment came into effect and our new Arts Team Lead Officer, Kate Allen, took up post in early December.

17 Quarter 4 2012/13 priorities








- 17.1 Prepare for ‘On the Road’ programme for summer period due to major works
17.2 Prepare for major works to Old Town Hall



Service Concerns

There are no service concerns at this time.

Quarterly Performance Approval
Q3, 2012

Appendix A

Ref	Indicator	Updater	Q2 Target	Q2 Result	Q3 Target	Q3 Result	Trend	Updater Comments	Approval Comments
ASB01a	Number of reports of incidents of anti social behaviour across the borough	Trudy Mahon	1,783 Report(s)	1,330 Report(s)	1,354 Report(s)	1,059 Report(s)		Figures are continuing to fall	 Approved.
ASB02	Percentage of people responding to the survey who are satisfied with the service they have received following a report of Anti Social Behaviour	Trudy Mahon	Info only	100.00% (2/2)	Info only	No data		No data available	 Approved. Survey to be reviewed
CYP01a	Number of children attending Adventure Playgrounds	Jane Woodbridge	Info only	29,666 attendances	Info only	12,406 attendances		This is normally the quietest quarter at the APG's due to dark nights and the weather, plus school Christmas activities.	 Approved.
CYP01b	Number of children attending Youth Clubs at Adventure Playgrounds	Jane Woodbridge	Info only	1,065 attendances	Info only	1,340 attendances		We are only open for two weeks during December, so it is not a full quarter od	 Approved. The Youth Clubs at the Adventure Playgrounds have been very

							sessions.	successful
CYP02	Number of young people involved in Youth Democracy events	Claire Lynch	Info only	89 people	Info only	407 people	 This figure represents the number of attendees involved over the Local Democracy Week Period. The Figure includes; Presentation skills training 12 Rights of the Child taster sessions 51 Art Democracy Competition 270 Art Democracy Exhibition and presentation from Dacorum Youth Forum and Youth Action Entertainers 48 Neighbourhood Action publicity design and visit to Technik	 Approved. An extremely successful Local Democracy Week

								15 Trip to Houses of Parliament 11	
NA01	Number of projects relating to NAG's action plans	Joe Guiton	Info only	No data	Info only	No data		Allotment project consultation has been carried out with 65 responses. Highfield youth club location is being followed up at YewTree School. Christmas lights at 4 more shopping centres.	Approved.
NA02	Number of attendances of Neighbourhood Action meetings by residents	Joe Guiton	Info only	372 attendances	Info only	372 attendances		Good numbers again. Christmas lights this year have help and it is expected to grow	Approved.
OTH01	Average attendance at the Old Town Hall theatre	Sara Railson	Info only	57.00%	Info only	58.00%			Approved.
OTH02	Old Town Hall User Satisfaction	Sara Railson	Info only	100.00%	Info only	100.00%			Approved.
OTH03	Number of private hire bookings of the Old Town Hall	Sara Railson	Info only	23 bookings	Info only	40 bookings			Approved.



Dacorum Community Safety Partnership 3rd Quarter 2012-13 Performance Report (Overview & Scrutiny)

Introduction

Under legislation (Crime & Disorder Act 1998), the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has a responsibility to bring relevant agencies and bodies together with the aim of reducing Crime, Disorder, Anti-Social Behaviour and the impact of the misuse of drugs and alcohol upon our communities.

In order to facilitate this, each year, a Strategic Assessment of Crime and Disorder is produced for the Borough and from this strategic priorities are agreed. For 2012/13 the following are the strategic priorities for the partnership

Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage Dwelling Burglary Vehicle Crime Alcohol Misuse Drug Misuse Managing Offenders/ Reducing Re Offending

In the current year, funding of £34,000 has been available to the Partnership to assist with initiatives to assist in reducing Crime & Disorder. Despite the reduction in size of this grant compared to previous years, performance continues to be strong. A summary of spend so far against this budget is included at the end of this report.

Performance

All Crime

All Crime in the Borough has reduced by 13% compared to the same period last year. In terms of numbers there were 5149 Crimes recorded so far this year, which means that there have been 798 fewer victims of crime across the borough compared to last year.

The performance of all CSPs in England and Wales is monitored by the Home Office and in order for meaningful comparisons to be made authorities are grouped together in clusters of the 15 most similar authorities. In the current year, Dacorum has moved from being the 6th best performing authority to the 4th best out of 15.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage

Records of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cover a wide range of incidents and are collated by both Herts. Police and Dacorum Borough Council. Reports of ASB are

classified in the following three categories; Environmental, Nuisance & Personal. Of all ASB recorded so far this year in Dacorum, 67% were Nuisance, 30% were Personal and the remaining 3% were Environmental.

In this current Period there have been 3655 reports of ASB across the borough which is a 27% reduction compared to the previous year, which equates to 1378 fewer incidents.

Initiatives of note in this period have included multi agency Community Safety & Drive Safe Events being delivered to all secondary state schools in Dacorum. There is a close working relationship between the authority ASB Team and the local police Safer Neighbourhoods Team to ensure that issues are identified before they escalate.

Criminal Damage

In this current Period there have been 924 crimes recorded across the borough which is a 14% reduction compared to the previous year, which equates to 144 fewer crimes.

Dwelling Burglary

In this current Period there have been 308 Burglaries recorded across the borough which is an 11 % reduction compared to the previous year, which equates to 36 fewer crimes.

Vehicle Crime

In this current Period there have been 590 vehicle crimes recorded across the borough which is a 25% reduction compared to the previous year, which equates to 200 fewer crimes.

Tackling Alcohol & Drugs Misuse

On 1/4/12 the arrangements for delivery of Drugs Treatment Services changed within Hertfordshire. Whilst data is available, this CSP is working with the treatment provider (CRI) to obtain further datasets to provide a fuller picture of the drugs environment within Dacorum.

From the most recent figures available, Dacorum had 17 young people (Under 18s) receiving specialist/targeted treatment for drug issues. For those over 18 there were 268 clients in such structured treatment.

Treatment for those subject to alcohol addiction is provided by a range of agencies across the county, but figures indicate that there are around 175 clients over 18 in structured treatment for alcohol addiction/misuse.

Figures indicate alcohol related offences falling by around 14% with 70% of these offences relating to violence. Of the 10 local authorities in Herts. Dacorum sits 4th best in terms of these crimes per 1000 population.

Managing Offenders/Reducing Reoffending

Working on the principle that a small number of offenders commit the majority of crime which occurs in a locality, it makes sense to focus activity on deterring/preventing these individuals from committing further crime. This takes place in a variety of ways and is generally through multi agency activity coordinated by an Integrated Offender Management (IOM) approach which identifies Prolific & Priority Offenders (PPOs). Of the ten Herts Boroughs, Dacorum has the highest number (40)

of such offenders. Adopting such an approach is contributing to the success in Crime Reduction achieved in Dacorum.

The CSP supports initiatives around the IOM approach and has recently provided funding for a project (Hemel Stags Rugby League Club) which provides work based skills for offenders.

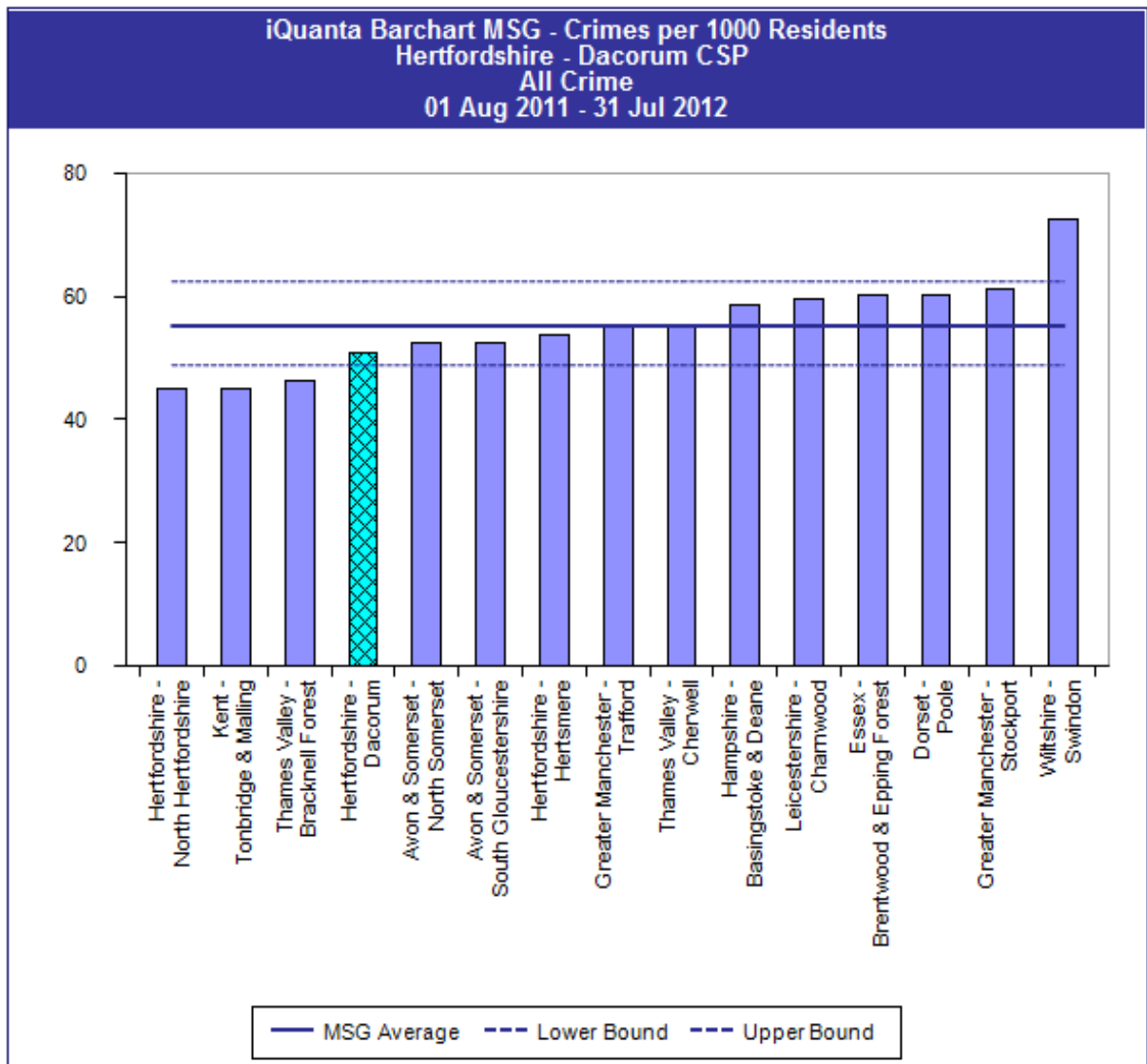
Funding

Dacorum Community Safety Partnership Safer & Stronger Communities Fund 2012-2013

Details of Bid	Amount Allocated	Comments	Balance
			Total allocated - £34,569
Letterbox Guards HF&RS	£999	Approved JAG 7/6/12	£33,570
Community Payback	£2,000	Approved RAG 1/10/12	£31,570
“Billy’s Wish” – Associated costs to production of knife crime DVD	£1,500	Approved JAG 4/6/12	£30,070
Swan Project- Lighting Canal Fields Skatepark Lighting	£1500	Approved JAG 1/11/12	£28,570
Chaulden Adventure Playground – Equipment and renovation	£2828.87	Approved JAG 1/11/12	£25,741.13
Adeyfield Adventure Playground – Equipment and renovation	£3858.93	Approved JAG 1/11/12	£21882.20
Hemel Stags Rugby Club – PPO Project	£3,300	Approved RAG 3/12/12	£18,582.20
Letterbox Guards HF&RS	£1,400	Approved JAG 6/12/12	£17,182.20
Anti Theft Purse Lanyards Pc M Cann	£500	Approved JAG 6/12/12	£16,682.20
Vulnerable Victims Mobile Phones Pc S Latif	£200	Approved JAG 6/12/12	£16,482.20
Independence For Young Homeless People Deborah Beattie TYST	£500	Approved JAG 6/12/12	£15,982.20

*Report Prepared by Dave Moore
Community Safety Partnership Coordinator
Dacorum Borough Council
January 2013*

APPENDIX C



CSP	Crimes per 1000 Residents
Hertfordshire - North Hertfordshire	45.060
Kent - Tonbridge & Malling	45.071
Thames Valley - Bracknell Forest	46.157
Hertfordshire - Dacorum	50.826
Avon & Somerset - North Somerset	52.395
Avon & Somerset - South Gloucestershire	52.578
Hertfordshire - Hertsmere	53.861
Greater Manchester - Trafford	55.152
Thames Valley - Cherwell	55.253
Hampshire - Basingstoke & Deane	58.679
Leicestershire - Charnwood	59.427
Essex - Brentwood & Epping Forest	60.264
Dorset - Poole	60.379
Greater Manchester - Stockport	61.164
Wiltshire - Swindon	72.528
Dacorum MSG Average	55.253



AGENDA ITEM: 7

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	23rd January 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Quarter Three Performance Report – Regulatory Services
Contact:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services Author/Responsible Officers: Steven Baker, Assistant Director (Legal, Democratic & Regulatory) Rita McGinlay, Group Manager (Regulatory Services)
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with the performance report for quarter 3 in relation to Regulatory Services.
Recommendations:	That Members note the report.
Corporate objectives:	Resources and Value For Money; Optimise Resources and Implement Best Practice.
Implications:	Financial: None.
'Value For Money Implications'	Value for Money: Monitoring Performance supports the Council in achieving Value for Money for its citizens.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed for each service area as part of service planning and reviewed quarterly.

Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment completed for each service area as part of service planning and reviewed quarterly.
Health And Safety Implications	None.
Consultees:	
Background papers:	Quarterly Performance Report – quarter 3 (attached).
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

1. Background

1.1 For the purpose of this report, 'Regulatory Services' includes the following services:

- Environmental Health (Food Safety, Health and Safety, Statutory Nuisances, Contaminated Land, Drainage, Private Water Supplies, Infectious Diseases, Air Quality Management)
- Private Sector Housing (HMOs, Illegal Eviction, Private Sector Landlord Issues, Improvement Grants, Disabled Facilities Grants, etc)
- Home Energy Conservation
- Pest Control
- Stray Dogs / Dog Warden Services
- Clinical Waste
- Cesspool Emptying
- Environmental Enforcement and High Hedges
- Emergency and Business Continuity Planning
- Street Trading

2. Regulatory Services Performance Indicators

There are no significant performance issues to bring to Members' attention arising in Quarter 2. There has been slippage in one area, REG02 – Percentage of high risk (category A and B) food premises inspected that were due in the quarter. This is partly due to a heavy quarter 2 and partly due to staff resourcing issues. An experienced Environmental Health Officer has recently joined the team though and is already making a valuable contribution. The Food Safety Team is still on track to reach its end of year target.

3. Food Safety

3.1 Officers were required to formally close another food premises in Quarter 3. This was due to a serious mouse infestation, causing a significant health risk. Officers have worked with the Food Business Operator to deal with the risk and the business has since been allowed to re-open.

3.2 Another food business voluntarily closed, following the discovery by officers of a cockroach infestation.

3.3 Following the success of the Tesco Primary Authority partnership, 2 other large businesses have approached the Council with an interest in forming partnerships. Negotiations are taking place.

3.4 Environmental Health Officers have been busy providing support and advice on the prevention of Norovirus throughout Quarter 3. (Routine surveillance data collated by the Health Protection Agency indicated in October 2012 that the 2012/13 Norovirus season had begun early. Laboratory reports of Norovirus have shown a significant increase in cases compared with the same period in recent years.)

4. Home Energy Conservation

It was reported previously that officers had been working with colleagues at Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council, to produce a Hertfordshire bid for £0.5 million funding to deliver the Warmer Homes, Healthy People campaign. The bid was largely successful, with £395,000 awarded to Hertfordshire. Officers continue to support Hertfordshire County Council with the management of the scheme and to promote it to local residents. Colleagues in other departments of the Council have been called upon to assist with this.

5. Emergency Planning

The report from the Internal Audit of the Emergency Planning service has been received. A very high compliance rate was achieved, with just 2 minor improvements recommended. These have been implemented.

QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – REGULATORY SERVICES



AGENDA ITEM: 8

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing & Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	23rd January 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Quarter Three Performance Report, Service Plan Update & Operational Risk Register – Housing Landlord
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Author/Responsible Officer: Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director Housing
Purpose of report:	(1) To provide Members with the Quarter 3 performance information (2012/13), update on progress of the Service Plan & Operational Risk Register for the Housing Landlord Service Area.
Recommendation	1) That Members note the Quarter 3 Performance Report, Service Plan update and Operational Risk Register.
Corporate objectives:	Effective Performance Monitoring will have a positive impact on all corporate objectives directly or indirectly.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> None.
'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Value for Money</u> Monitoring Performance supports the Council in achieving Value for Money in all areas of service delivery.
Risk Implications	The Housing Landlord Operational Service Risk Register was reviewed during the 3 rd Quarter of 2012/13 and will be

	reviewed quarterly.
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment completed for each Service Area and reviewed annually or as and when there is Policy change
Health And Safety Implications	None
Consultees:	Fiona Williamson – Group Manager, Property & Place Andy Vincent – Group Manager, Tenancy & Leasehold
Background papers:	None

1. Introduction

This report details the performance of the Housing Landlord Service during the 3rd quarter of 2012/13 against performance indicators, as well as updating the Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding progress of the Housing Service Plan which was agreed with the Tenant & Leaseholder Committee in March 2012 following extensive consultation.

The report also details the Housing Landlord 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. Housing Landlord Performance Report - Quarter 3 2012/13

Appendix 1 shows performance against the 'Service Critical' performance indicators for the Quarter 3 period of October – December 2012.

The performance of the interim Gas Servicing contract will be reported in its own report at the January Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2.1. Quarter 3 Performance Highlights

2.1.1 Average time taken to re-let a Council property – (adapted)

For the three month period of September – December 6 adapted properties were let to tenants with an average turnaround time of 36 days. This is against a target of 50 days and performance in the previous quarter of 74 days.

The improvement is due to a new closer working relationship between Strategic Housing and Housing Landlord, as well as more time taken to ensure the best fit regarding the needs of a tenant is found within the stock. This minimises required works.

2.1.2 Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made

99.19% of appointments made within the three month period were kept by our repairs contractor MITIE. This obviously ensures minimum disruption to the tenant and reduces the time taken for a repair to be satisfactorily carried out following the initial report made.

2.1.3 Average time taken to re-let all properties

Overall the Council is ensuring that its empty homes are re-let quickly to ensure rent loss is kept to a minimum and new tenants move into a home as soon as possible. The overall figure of 34.75 days is good performance and the result of several months of reviewing the process.

It is hoped that the introduction of an Empty Homes Lead Officer in 2013/14 will further improve performance.

2.1.4 Rent Collected as a percentage of rent owed (excluding arrears brought forward)

To achieve a performance level in excess of 100% (100.16%) in the current financial climate is excellent. Arrears performance on the whole is improving rapidly and many initiatives which started in the early part of the year are now showing their value.

An example of this is that following a recent 'evening ring around' whereby tenants in arrears are called in the evening by an Income Officer, each one of those tenants made a payment within the next week. The Christmas 'Pay your Rent' campaign has also proved to be a success.

2.1.5 Acknowledgement of a report of ASB within 24 hours

Performance in this area has gradually improved throughout the year to a point where during the 3rd quarter all 88 reports of ASB from Council tenants or leaseholders were acknowledged within 24 hours. This gives the person suffering the alleged ASB reassurance regarding who is dealing with their case and what action can be expected.

2.2. Additional Performance Information

At the December 2012 Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee officers were asked to report on the following information for quarter 3 of 2012/13.

- Number of Sheltered properties let and number of those which exceeded 50 days.

59 sheltered properties were let and 17 took longer than 50 days

- Number of General Needs properties let and number which took longer than 30 days

129 General Needs properties were let and 55 took longer than 30 days

3. Housing Service Plan

Appendix 2 details progress against the 2012/13 Service Plan.

Following the transfer of Strategic Housing to the Assistant Director for Housing in November, actions have been added that relate to the Strategic Housing department.

Consultation is planned for February with the Tenants & Leaseholder Committee to decide what the priorities should be for housing in 2013/14.

4. 2012/13 Housing Landlord Operational Risk Register

Appendix 3 details the key risks identified to monitor and report against. They are reviewed quarterly by the Housing Senior Management Team (HSMT) whereby work undertaken to mitigate will be reflected in the assessments.

APPENDIX 1 – HOUSING LANDLORD PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

***APPENDIX 2- HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICE PLAN
OBJECTIVES***

***APPENDIX 3 - HOUSING LANDLORD OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER
REPORTS***



AGENDA ITEM: 9

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	23rd January 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Housing Allocations Policy Report
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Julia Hedger – Strategic Housing Group Manager Isabel Connolly – Housing Strategy and Partnerships Officer
Purpose of report:	To bring the new draft Housing Allocations Policy (Appendix 1) with Points Testing to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their feedback. All feedback and views will be considered over the course of a six week consultation period starting in January 2013.
Recommendations	For members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the content of the new draft policy document and give their feedback.
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> For the policy to go live a new technical specification will need to be developed with Abrisas who provide the computer software for managing the Council's housing register, as the new policy will require system changes. This cost has already been accounted for in the budgets for Housing Strategy (revenue budget) and Housing Landlord (HRA capital budget), and costs are to be split 50:50. There are no additional implications. From early discussions Abrisas have advised an estimate cost of £20,000. The 2013/14 Housing Strategy

	<p>budget has received a £10,000 injection specifically for this purpose. Housing Landlord HRA budget has been allocated as Abritas is used to manage the internal transfer register for Council tenants.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>Recent legislative changes, principally in the Localism Act 2011, which impact on social housing allocations, have permitted local housing authorities to make changes to the way in which they manage their housing registers and which will support long-term value-for-money savings by encouraging the most effective use of stock.</p> <p><u>Legal</u></p> <p>The Council is required in law to publish a scheme with its policy and procedure for allocating social housing. This document serves that requirement.</p> <p>Due to the extent of recent legislative changes that have taken place the Council will seek expert legal opinion, as well as legal opinion from its internal legal department.</p>
Risk Implications	<p><u>Legal challenge</u></p> <p>Due to the extent of recent legislative changes, there is currently limited new case law from the courts to guide the Council.</p> <p>The Council has been very careful in its development of its policy and carried out a rigorous self-scrutinising process, including a report to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the main principles prior to drafting.</p> <p>The Council will seek expert legal opinion during the consultation period.</p> <p><u>Communications</u></p> <p>The new draft policy will result in a number of existing applicants no longer qualifying to the Council's 'Active Register'. These applicants will be placed onto a 'Deferred Register' and cease to be able to bid for properties. The Council will need to be careful about how it announces these changes, including close partnership work with local Housing Associations, as well as its internal Housing Landlord Department.</p> <p>A forum for local housing associations is being organised to take place during the consultation period in February.</p> <p>A double page spread is planned for the Council's Housing Landlord 'News and Views' magazine, which gets delivered to all Council tenants.</p>

	<p>There will also be a programme of in-house briefings and training sessions, led by the Housing Strategy Team, and which will be targeted at staff in the Housing Landlord Department and Customer Services.</p> <p>The Council is re-launching a number of its Housing Options and Homelessness leaflets and plans to tie this re-launch in with the new Housing Allocations Policy going live. In this way the Council can ensure that the overall message is a positive one about the range of housing options available and managing expectations.</p> <p><u>System failure</u></p> <p>The Council will develop a new technical specification with Abritas, the provider of its software programme for managing the Council's housing register, in order to incorporate the policy changes.</p> <p>The Council will ensure that its computer systems are ready and have been sufficiently tested before the policy goes live.</p>
<p>Equalities Implications</p>	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and provided with this report in Appendix 2.</p> <p>No reasons to expect discrimination have been identified that the Council does not have processes in place to mitigate.</p>
<p>Health And Safety Implications</p>	<p>The draft Housing Allocations Policy recognises Health and Safety standards for housing in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System: Guidance for Landlords and Property-Related Professionals.</p>
<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Deputy Monitoring Officer:</p> <p>The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires local authorities to have an allocations policy and procedure in place in order to allocate social housing</p> <p>Part VI Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 provides that every housing authority must have a scheme for determining priorities, and the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation and under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by Homelessness Act 2002) to make provision for homeless households.</p> <p>This policy aims to fulfill the Council's requirements under the Housing Act 1996.</p> <p>It is noted that legal opinion has not been sought prior to the conclusion of the policy and this should be sought during the consultation period to ensure that the policy is robust.</p>
<p>S.151 Officer</p>	<p>Budget has been included within the 2013/14 estimates to</p>

	cover the costs of software development, (as far as they are currently known). Legal review and the consultation process will be carried out by Council staff and will not result in additional budgetary impact.
Consultees:	<p>Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing</p> <p>Cllr Janice Marshall – Chair of H&C OSC</p> <p>Cllr Mahmood – Vice chair of H&C OSC</p> <p>Dacorum Borough Council Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Tenants and Leaseholders' Committee</p> <p>Mark Gaynor – Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration</p> <p>Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director Housing</p> <p>Andy Vincent – Group Manager for Tenants and Leaseholders</p> <p>Natasha Brathwaite – Housing Advice and Homelessness Team Leader</p> <p>Teresa Wood – Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Jack Burnham – Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader</p>
Background papers:	<p>The current Housing Allocations Policy -Oct 2011</p> <p>Strategic Tenancy Policy – January 2013</p> <p>Housing Principles – March 2012</p> <p>Localism Act 2011</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>H&C OSC – Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>TLC – Tenants and Leaseholder Committee</p>

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The current Housing Allocations Policy was approved by Cabinet in October 2011 and adopted on 1st December 2011. The Localism Act 2011 gave Councils new freedoms to allow Councils to manage their housing registers in a different way and to promote mobility for existing social tenants.
- 1.2 In the Code of Guidance 2012 (Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Authorities 2012) the Government encourages Councils to review their existing allocations policies and to introduce changes based on the new flexibilities brought in by the Localism Act 2011, and which they have endorsed in the guidance. The Localism Act changes came into force on 18th June 2012. Councils were not required to amend their policies immediately,

although the guidance recommends that allocations policies are reviewed in a timely manner.

- 1.3 Dacorum Borough Council has been very careful by considering the legislation and new possibilities for managing social housing allocations prior to commencing on the draft of its new Housing Allocations Policy. A small working party of Councillors and Officers met on four occasions to rigorously consider all implications, benefits and potential risks. Once the main policy proposals had been formed these were then outlined in a report to the Council's Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 5th December 2012.
- 1.4 The Council is now confident that the policy changes in the new draft policy have appropriately adopted the new flexibilities within the legislation and Government guidance, while maintaining a policy which is in-line with local needs.
- 1.5 The proposed time line for the Council's new Housing Allocations Policy is as follows:
 - Sept and Oct 2012
 - Member/staff working group discussed principles of new Allocations policy (Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Cllr Janice Marshall and Cllr Mahmood)
 - Dec 2012
 - Principles developed by staff and Member working group presented to H&C OSC for feedback and discussion
 - January 2013
 - New draft policy based on the principles presented to TLC on 14th January, followed by Cabinet on 22nd January and H&C OSC on 23rd January.
 - Public consultation will begin on the new draft policy
 - March 2013
 - The new Housing Allocations Policy will be recommended for Cabinet approval, including the comments from Consultation.
 - Update to H&C OSC
 - April 2013
 - Recommendation to full Council to adopt new policy with immediate effect.
- 1.6 Attached as Appendix 3 is the current Housing Allocations Policy, including the existing points table, Appendix 1 is the draft consultation version of the proposed new Housing Allocations Policy.

2. Main policy changes

In summary the main changes to the new proposed scheme are as follows –

- 2.1 **New qualifying criteria to join the Housing Register**

A number of new qualifying groups have been introduced in the draft policy. Applicants who do not meet the criteria for these groups will be placed on a 'Deferred Register' and will not be eligible to bid for properties. This approach will help the Council better manage applicants' expectations.

The new qualifying criteria include local connection, home-ownership and priority need. Applicants who meet the qualifying criteria will be placed on an 'Active Register' and will be able to bid for properties.

Applicants who own a property will be placed on the Deferred Register unless aged 60 and over. These applicants over 60 will be eligible to bid for sheltered housing only.

The cut-off age for eligibility to sheltered housing has been amended from 50 to 60 years of age, except where a younger applicant has a substantial need for the type of support provided in this accommodation, as recommended by the Council's medical advisor.

Applicants with no identified priority housing need (someone not within a reasonable preference category as defined by the Housing Act 1996, Part 6) will be placed on the Deferred Register.

2.2 Local Connection requirements

This has been strengthened to ensure applicants with a local connection are given priority for local housing.

Applicants exempt from the local connection qualifying criteria include members of the armed forces and former service personnel when an application is made within 5 years of discharge. This is in line with the CLG guidance on allocations.

2.3 Homelessness

Applicants who are "statutory homeless" and accepted onto the Active Register for housing will be awarded a status rather than a set number of points. This is to prevent "points chasing".

2.4 Private sector condition of property

The policy states clearly that properties owned by the Council and Housing Associations are excluded from this points award as specific regulatory standards apply to social landlords. Residents in these properties receive greater protection and will not find themselves trapped in housing with identified Health and Safety hazards. This category has been split so that there are two levels of criteria – low and high.

2.5 Overcrowding

For the purpose of the new policy members of the same household are considered "children" until eldest reaches age 21. This is in line with the new guidance.

2.6 Children in flats

The policy introduces new criteria to this points award. If a lift is available then points will not be awarded, and the award is only applicable to families with children under 10 years of age.

2.7 Under occupation

These points have been increased to ensure applicants living in Council-owned larger properties who wish to move to a smaller property can. The higher points award means that these applicants

will now have a good chance of getting an offer for any property that they choose to bid for.

2.8 'Medical' and 'Welfare' points

Both these points awards have now been split so that there are four criteria levels, introducing a new criteria level for 'extreme' cases. This has been introduced so that the policy can support applicants in immediate need to successfully bid for properties, rather than having to rely on receiving a direct offer.

2.9 Length of time on register points

This award has been reduced to reflect the Council's strategic Housing Principle; to house those in greatest need.

3. Consultation

3.1 The proposed consultation period will commence in January 2013 and run for the statutory six weeks. All comments and feedback will then be considered before the policy comes back to Cabinet in March for approval. It is proposed that the policy will then be taken to full Council for adoption in April 2013.

3.2 **The recommendation of this report is for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the content of the new draft policy document and give their feedback, which can then be considered during the consultation period.**

4. Points Testing

The below examples have been included to demonstrate that the proposed points in the draft Housing Allocations Policy will fairly distinguish between applicants' relative levels of need and levels of priority.

Please note: There is no mention of local connection in any of these examples as residents not meeting the necessary local connection criteria will be on the Deferred Register and therefore not able to bid for properties.

Example A

Mr & Mrs A live in a 2 bedroom Council-owned house. They have two children John 8 and Natalie 10. They have been on the register for six years.

Overcrowding	15 (Natalie needs her own room)
Time on register	5
Total	20
Bedrooms	Mr & Mrs A can bid for 3 bedroom properties only

Example B

Mr B is a single person living in a private rented one bedroom flat in Berkhamsted without a car. His social network is located in Hemel Hempstead and the Housing Panel has awarded low 'Welfare' points for social isolation. Mr B recently ceased service in the regular armed forces. He has been on the register for one year.

Welfare (low)	10
Members of the armed forces	10
Time on register	1
Total	21
Bedrooms	Mr B can bid for 1 bedroom properties only

Example C

Mr & Mrs C live in a private rented 2 bedroom flat. They are on the third floor and there is no lift available. They have 3 children, Peter 12, William 8 and Sarah 6. They have been on the register for two years.

Overcrowding	15 (Peter and William can share until Peter is 21, and Sarah will need her own bedroom)
Children in flats	10 (these points would be removed once Sarah is 10)
Time on register	2
Total	27
Bedrooms	Mr & Mrs C can bid for 3 bedroom properties only

Example D

Mr & Mrs D live in a private rented 2 bedroom flat outside the town centre at the edge of a residential area, without a car and not close to public transport. The Housing Panel has awarded low 'Welfare' points for access to child care. They have been given a notice making them threatened with homelessness. They have two children Ben 16 and Abby 2. They have been on the register for three years.

Homeless	5 (the 'homelessness status' is only given at the point that a full homelessness duty is accepted by the Council, even where a family is judged likely to receive the full duty)
Welfare (low)	10
Overcrowding	15 (Ben needs his own room)
Time on register	3
Total	33
Bedrooms	Mr & Mrs D can bid for 3 bedroom properties only

Example E

Mr E is a single person, living in a private rented one bedroom flat, sharing a kitchen and bathroom. Mr E recently ceased service in the regular armed forces due to injury and has 'medium' medical needs (as advised by the independent medical advisor). He has been on the register for one year and just completed a pre-tenancy training course.

Condition of private sector property	10
Medical (low)	30
Members of the armed forces	10
Pre-tenancy training	5
Time on register	1
Total	56
Bedrooms	Mr E can bid for 1 bedroom properties only

Example F

Mr & Mrs F live in a private rented 2 bedroom flat. Mrs F has 'high' medical needs (as advised by the independent medical advisor). They have four children Josh 22, Ryan 18, Chris 15 and Amy 5. They have been on the register for four years.

Medical (high)	50
Overcrowding	30 (Josh needs his own room, Ryan and Chris can share until Ryan is 21, Amy will need her own room)
Time on register	4
Total	84
Bedrooms	Mr & Mrs F can bid for 4 bedroom properties only

Example G

Mrs G is a Council tenant occupying a 3 bedroom house looking to downsize. Mrs G also has 'low' medical needs (as advised by the independent medical advisor). She has been on the register for four years.

Under occupation	90 (45 points for each bedroom the applicant is under-occupying)
Medical (low)	10
Time on register	4
Total	104
Bedrooms	Mrs G can bid for 1 or 2 bedroom properties only

Example H

Ms H has one bedroom in private rented shared accommodation, sharing a bathroom and lacking kitchen facilities (there is only a shared microwave and sink). She has a son, Matthew 18 months, and is suffering harassment from her former partner – the police have advised that she should move as a priority. She has been on the register for one year.

Welfare (extreme)	100
Condition of private sector property	50
Overcrowding	15 (Matthew needs his own room)
Time on register	1
Total	166
Bedrooms	Ms H can bid for 2 bedroom properties only

APPENDIX 1 – NEW DRAFT HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

APPENDIX 2 – DBC EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

APPENDIX 3 – CURRENT HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY



AGENDA ITEM: 10

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	23 January 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Reviewing Dacorum Borough Council's Approach to Under-Occupation
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Andy Vincent, Group Manager – Tenants and Leaseholders Author/Responsible Officer
Purpose of report:	To update committee members on the proposals to amend the existing incentive schemes to assist tenants to move into smaller accommodation and older people to move into sheltered accommodation.
Recommendations	It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee members support the proposal to enhance the existing arrangements enabling tenants under-occupying their home to move to smaller accommodation.
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing Housing Principle – Making Best Use of the Housing Stock
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>
'Value For Money Implications'	A budget of £170,000 in 2013/14 has been established to assist tenants to move to smaller accommodation, to assist older people to move into sheltered housing and to move tenants who are unable to live in their property due to it requiring major renovation works. <u>Value for Money</u> The value for money implications are considered in the

	background to the proposals Section 1.0
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed in November 2012
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out when approval is sought for the policy.
Health And Safety Implications	None
Consultees:	Portfolio Holder for Housing Director of Housing and Regeneration Tenant and Leaseholder Committee Tenants at the Housing Conference, via an on line consultation exercise and within <i>Housing News and Views</i>
Background papers:	Welfare Reform Act 2012 http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/legislation-and-key-documents/welfare-reform-act-2012/ Housing Allocations Policy http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=6652
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	Under-occupation This is where a household living in a property does not utilise all the bedrooms within it. Due to spare bedrooms the property is considered to be under-occupied.

1.0 Background

Addressing under-occupation has the potential to:-

1. Reduce the levels of housing need within an area as measured by the Housing Register
2. Minimise the impact of welfare benefit changes on rent collection performance, and on the financial pressure on tenants losing benefit.

1.1 Reducing Housing Need

Tackling under-occupation has a direct correlation with reductions in housing need. By 'freeing up' often highly desirable property types this can reduce both the number of households on the housing register as well as reducing the most pressing forms of housing need.

"It is clear that tackling under-occupation is a more cost-effective method of meeting housing need than building new homes. This is not to deny that more homes need to be built. Far from it: new homes do need to be built but the cost of employing an officer dedicated to under-occupation is far cheaper than new development.'the long term benefits far outweigh the initial financial outlay. The annual cost of two or three dedicated staff, plus paying for all

expenses associated with moving including a cash incentive, is always going to be less than building the equivalent number of homes.”

Under-occupation Report – National Housing Federation

Addressing under-occupation can also reduce the number of major adaptations undertaken; by freeing up adapted or adaptable properties this can have a major impact on the resources devoted making properties fit for disabled tenants.

1.2 Maintaining rent collection performance

The changes to welfare benefits introduced as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 are likely to impact on the rent collection performance of Dacorum Borough Council Housing Service. The introduction of the Social Sector Size Criteria will reduce the benefit entitlement of household's under-occupying their home. Where there is a discrepancy between the size of the home occupied and the size of home required welfare benefit claimants will receive a 14% reduction in Housing Benefit for having 1 'spare' bedroom and a 25% reduction for 2+ 'spare' bedrooms. Nationally it is anticipated that 670,000 households will be affected by the changes.

Dacorum Borough Council has done some work with the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Housing Benefit service to model the impact on tenant's income within the district of the introduction of the Social Sector Size Criteria; this modelling indicates a £825,000 reduction in tenant's income across the borough.

2.0 National/regional context

Data from the Survey of English Housing details the extent of under-occupation across the country. In 2009/10 37% of households were considered to be under-occupying their home, with 11% of households under-occupying within the socially rented sector.

Across the Eastern Region over 40% percent or over 950,000 homes are under-occupied. Within the socially rented stock 48,000 homes or 13% of the stock is under-occupied.

The largest number of households with two or more spare rooms have a main tenant over 75 years of age, so it is impossible to discuss under-occupation without addressing the challenge of meeting the housing and support needs of older tenants.

2.1 Dacorum Context – existing approach

Dacorum Borough Council currently operates two 'under-occupation' incentive schemes.

1. The Tenant Removal Scheme – is available to older tenants wishing to move in to sheltered accommodation. The scheme offers tenants support in moving, including moving furniture and belongings, disconnecting and reconnecting gas appliances, disconnecting and reconnecting washing machines and paying for the tenant's phone to be transferred. A financial incentive is also given to tenants who move via the scheme:-

The amount payable is in accordance with the following scale:

Moving from 4 bedroom house - £1000.00

Moving from 3 bedroom house - £750.00

Moving from 2 bedroom house - £500.00

Moving from 2/3 bedroom flat - £500.00

2. Under-occupation scheme – this is available to any secure tenant wishing to move within the ‘general needs’ stock. Within this scheme tenants are offered a financial incentive to move to smaller accommodation. A tenant moving under the scheme will be entitled to a payment of £750 per bedroom released when moving to smaller accommodation.

In 2011/12 44 tenants moved via the Tenant Removal Scheme and 2 tenants moved via the Under-Occupation scheme. It is clear that these two schemes in their current guise are having different degrees of success in reducing the scale of under-occupation within the borough, with the Tenant Removal Scheme proving quite successful.

Scale of Under-occupation within the borough

The information available on the Orchard Housing Management System indicates that over 11% of the housing stock managed by Dacorum Borough Council is under-occupied. This information must be viewed with a number of caveats:-

1. The information relies on Orchard being updated at the point a new tenant is offered a property
2. As household members change Orchard needs to be kept up to date and relies on tenants informing Dacorum Borough Council of any changes to the make-up of their family.

Of the tenants under-occupying their home 47% are over 65 (if these tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit they will not be affected by the proposed welfare benefit changes and the introduction of the Social Sector Size Criteria).

Work undertaken by Dacorum Borough Council’s Housing Benefit Department indicates the impact on tenants of the changes to welfare benefits to be introduced in April 2013 (the Social Sector Size Criteria) is as follows:-

Number of bedrooms over requirement	Number of benefit cases	Proportion of working age cases	Average weekly reduction in benefit	Lowest reduction	Highest reduction
1	713	24.5%	£15.12	£4.71	£20.84
2 or more	188	6.4%	£27.59	£11.48	£34.43
overall	901	30.9%	£17.72		

Produced in 2012

165 under-occupying tenants have expressed an interest in moving home, by registering a housing application. Number of live applicants on the Housing Register 5,000 (May 2012)

Number of applicants under-occupying their home	Number of bedrooms being under-occupied
93	1
63	2
9	3

3.3% of the applicants on the housing register are in receipt of under-occupation points.

Age profile of the applicant's under-occupying their home

Age Group	Number (total)	Number of bedroom being under-occupied		
		1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
0-24	1	0	1	0
25-50	27	24	3	0
51-69	62	35	22	5
70-89	68	31	34	3
90+	7	3	3	1

3.0 Consultation

In June 2012 proposals were developed identifying the areas which tenants would be consulted on in order to review the Council's approach to under-occupation. These are around:

1. Simplifying the available incentives by removing the differentiation between the under-occupation scheme and the tenant's removal scheme
2. Giving tenants under-occupying their home greater priority within the Allocations Policy to move.
3. Considering allowing tenants moving out of a large home the ability to retain one 'spare' bedroom.
4. Promote the Council's approach to under-occupation proactively on the Moving with Dacorum website if an applicant indicates they are under-occupying.
5. Allowing greater incentives to be made, encouraging households to move out of 'desirable' properties such as bungalows if that stops expensive adaptations being made to other less suitable homes.

Following these proposals being developed following consultation has been undertaken:-

- Article in News and Views (autumn edition)
- Workshop at the Tenants and Leaseholder Conference
- Email communication with 165 tenants who are on the housing register with priority for under-occupying their home

4 tenants attended the workshop at the Tenant and Leaseholder Conference – 23 tenants have responded to the email communication.

The comments below summarise the responses:

“The proposal that I would be allowed to retain a spare bedroom is one that I would welcome very much and would definitely encourage me to move to a smaller property sooner.”

“..we wholeheartedly agree that the housing allocations policy needs reviewing, it seems silly that more points are given to people needing bigger houses whilst those wanting to go into smaller accommodation are overlooked. It makes sense that if the people wanting to downsize were given priority this would free up the bigger houses for the people who need more bedrooms. We think the idea of paying for removals and a cash incentive is a good idea, however obviously we would only consider moving if both the property and location were acceptable to us.”

“Any financial help in moving would obviously be welcome but as we have been looking at swaps where we would have borne the cost this is not the prime factor. Finding a property we want to move to is equally important.”

4.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee members support the recommendation that Dacorum Borough Council adopts one incentive scheme (an enhanced version of the current Tenant Removal Scheme) for all tenants moving as a result of under-occupation or who are moving because their existing home would require a major adaptation.

The Tenant Removal Scheme regularly assists tenants to move into sheltered housing. The scheme is valued by tenants and is achieving over 40 moves per year. The current under occupation incentive scheme is not achieving many moves (approximately 2 per year). Enhancing the under-occupation scheme will take much of the ‘haste’ out of moving and reduce the costs associated with moving house for tenants. Assisting people with low incomes to move could; increase the numbers of moves and offer a solution for those people who are struggling to pay their rent and who cannot afford the costs associated with moving.

The Tenant Removal Scheme – is available to older tenants wishing to move in to sheltered accommodation. The scheme offers tenants support in moving, including moving furniture and belongings, disconnecting and reconnecting gas appliances, disconnecting and reconnecting washing machines and paying for the tenants phone to be transferred. A financial incentive is also given to tenants who move via the scheme:-

It is recommended that the amount payable in an enhanced version of the Tenant Removal Scheme is in accordance with the following scale (please note that tenants will move either into a property size that matches their housing need or a maximum of one bedroom in excess):

Giving up 3 or more bedrooms - £2000.00

Giving up 2 bedrooms - £1000.00

Giving up 1 bedroom - £500.00

It is recommended that the Tenant Removal Scheme is renamed to – **Help to move to a smaller home** (see appendix 1 for a draft of this policy)

It is also recommended that within the new Housing Allocations Policy applicants who are downsizing as a result of under-occupation who are moving out of a 3 or 4 bedroom property should be able to retain a spare bedroom.

Appendix 1



Helping tenants to move to a smaller home

Housing Service

November 2012

Version Control	
Status of Policy	Draft
Sponsor	Andy Vincent, Group Manager, Housing Landlord
Author/Reviewer	Lindsey Walsh, Tenant Services Manager
Approved	
Review Date	One year after above date

Policy Statement

Dacorum Borough Council is committed to assisting households to move into appropriately sized accommodation where possible. Dacorum Borough Council's Housing Allocations Policy sets out the size of property different sized households are entitled too.

This incentive scheme **helping tenant move to smaller accommodation** is designed to enable tenants occupying larger properties to move into smaller accommodation if they benefit from 'spare' bedroom(s) in their existing property (i.e. under-occupy their property).

This scheme will combine all previous incentive schemes developed by Dacorum Borough Council (the Tenant Removal Scheme, Disabled Facilities Grant moves and the Under-Occupation scheme).

It has been recognised that moving to a smaller property can reduce utility bills, rent and Council Tax. Dacorum Borough Council will allow tenants with rent arrears to move as the debt can be offset against the allowance provided under the scheme. This would enable those that are caught in a debt situation in larger properties to reduce their living expenditure each week and so help them to manage their debts.

The Scheme could also help those that are finding a larger property with a garden a struggle but are unable to afford the cost of moving. It is envisaged that the Scheme will also help to reduce those properties that are considered 'harder to let'.

Any tenant wishing to move via this scheme will need to have submitted a housing application and sought accommodation via the 'Moving with Dacorum' scheme. If they successfully bid for smaller accommodation then support for a move will be forthcoming via this scheme. This Scheme does not give any additional priority to an applicant and does not give the promise of an immediate move.

Where a tenancy is in dispute due to a relationship breakdown or where domestic violence has occurred, the remaining tenant(s) would not be eligible to move via the Under Occupation Scheme until the tenancy issues had been resolved.

Due to complications of rent arrears, types of tenancy, repairs and maintenance etc, it is not be viable to extend the scheme to Housing Association tenants that are currently on Dacorum Borough Council's housing register. (I.e. those tenants currently living in a property owned by a Housing Association that wish to move to a smaller property owned by Dacorum Borough Council).

Eligibility

A tenant will be eligible for this scheme if they are an introductory, secure or flexible tenant of Dacorum Borough Council occupying a two, three, four, five or six bedroom property and would like to move to a smaller property owned by the Council or a Housing Association in the Borough. (NB if moving to a two-bedroom property from

a three for example, only one bedroom is regarded as being released under this scheme).

A tenant will not be eligible if there is a Notice of Seeking Possession for breach of tenancy conditions currently in force. (With the exception of rent arrears where assistance can be provided under the scheme, provided the rent arrear does not exceed the amount of allowance that they are eligible for under the Scheme).

The Council will waive the requirement for the tenant to keep a clear rent account for three months, if it can be shown that a move to smaller accommodation will be beneficial to the tenant's financial circumstances. If the tenant has rent arrears, the allowance provided under the Scheme can be used to clear the debt after the move has taken place. Any balance will be paid to the tenant after the debt has been cleared.

In exceptional circumstances a move can also be considered if the debt exceeds the allowance provided under the Scheme. For example: If the tenant has Mental Health problems, deemed to be vulnerable due to a medical condition or learning difficulty etc. These cases will need to have independent support and will be assessed by the Council's Medical Advisor in conjunction with the Housing Panel. This would also be conditional on a firm arrangement being made with the tenant to clear the rent arrears after the move has taken place.

Terms of the scheme

This scheme is available to all introductory, secure or flexible tenants of Dacorum Borough Council transferring to more suitable accommodation, from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 bedroom dwellings (flats, maisonettes, bungalows and houses).

The Council knows that many tenants would like to move to smaller, more suitable accommodation, but are put off doing so by the thought of all the upheaval and the cost of moving.

In order to help tenants who do wish to move from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 bedroom properties to smaller accommodation owned by Dacorum Borough Council, the Council will FREE OF CHARGE:-

(Households who wish to move from a Dacorum Borough Council owned home into a Housing Association home and are giving up 'spare' bedrooms will benefit from this incentive scheme).

- 1) Arrange and pay for your furniture to be packed and moved.
- 2) Take up and relay your carpets. For tenants moving into sheltered housing carpets will be fitted in your new home.

- 3) Arrange for your cooker to be disconnected and to be refitted at your new home (if this is not possible a new electric cooker will be provided for tenants moving into sheltered housing).
- 4) Arrange and pay for relocation of your washing machine.
- 5) Pay for your telephone to be transferred.

The Council will also make you a one off payment once your transfer has completed, the amount payable is in accordance with the following scale:

Giving up 3 or more bedrooms - £2000.00

Giving up 2 bedrooms - £1000.00

Giving up 1 bedroom - £500.00

One payment will be made for each move and per household

To be considered for this scheme, you will need to be registered for a transfer and have enough points on our transfer list to qualify for a move to smaller accommodation.

If any tenant wishes to discuss their prospects for a transfer please ask them in the first instance to contact the Customer Service Unit or the Housing Options section at the Civic Centre.



AGENDA ITEM: 11

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	23rd January 2013
PART:	1

Title of report:	Strategic Tenancy policy
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Julia Hedger – Strategic Housing Group Manager
Purpose of report:	To update H&C OSC on the final version of the Strategic Tenancy Policy and provide a draft version of the Flexible Tenancy Review Procedure for comments.
Recommendations	That H&C OSC note the final version of the Strategic Tenancy Policy and comment on the proposed Flexible Tenancy Review Procedure.
Corporate objectives:	The main impact of the policy will contribute to the Council's Affordable Housing objective. The broader impacts will help the Council to meet objectives for economic development and sustainability.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> The policy can be implemented within existing budgets. <u>Value for Money</u> The value-for-money aims include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving flexibility in new lettings to social (Affordable) housing; and - Supporting the Council's Housing Principle to make best and most efficient use of the stock.
Risk implications:	Risk Assessment completed

Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment completed – no negative impacts identified.
Health And Safety Implications	None directly relating to the policy
Consultees:	Mark Gaynor – Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director Housing Andy Vincent – Group Manager Tenancy and Leasehold Dacorum Borough Council Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tenants and Leaseholders Committee
Background papers:	H&C OSC – 21 st March 2012 Cabinet report – 26 th March 2012 H&C OSC – 5 th December 2012 Cabinet report – 22 nd January 2013
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	STP – Strategic Tenancy Policy CBL – Choice Based Lettings LDF – Local Development Framework OSC – Overview and Scrutiny Committee RP – Registered Provider (latest name for Housing Association) STP – Strategic Tenancy Policy TLC – Tenants and Leaseholders Committee H&C OSC – Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Background

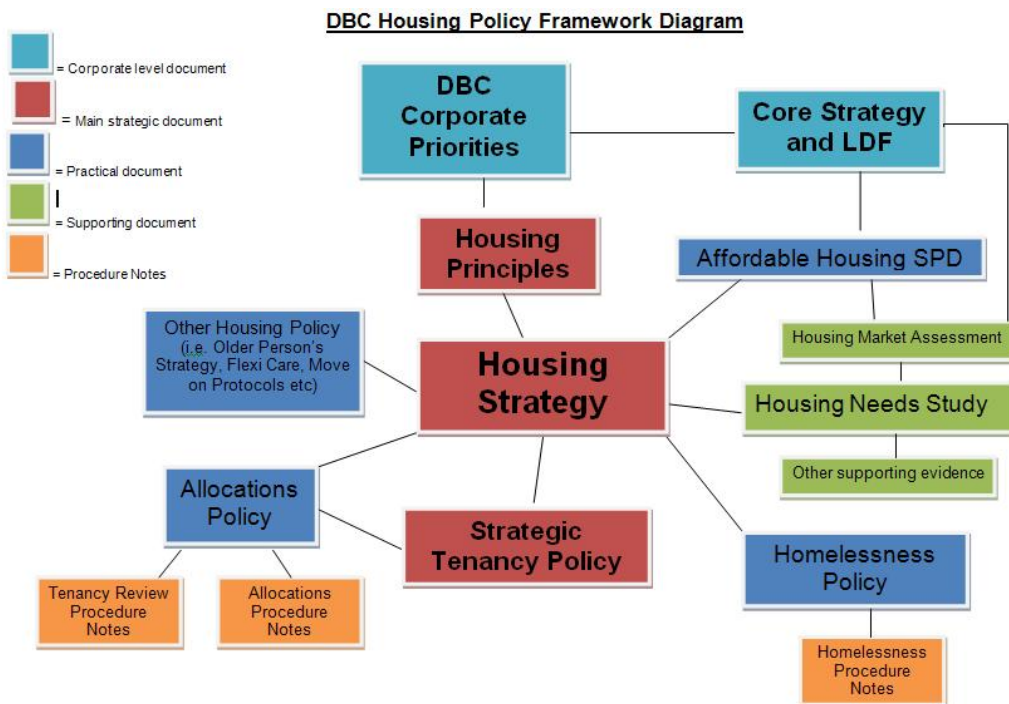
- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new statutory duty for local authorities to have in place a 'Tenancy Policy' by January 2013. Requirements for meeting this duty include:
- An explanation of the different types of tenancy a local authority will grant; and
 - A clear process for tenancy renewal where fixed-term 'Flexible Tenancies' are being introduced.

Cabinet and the Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee (H&C OSC) considered the principles of the Dacorum Borough Council draft policy at their meetings in March 2012.

- 1.2 The Council's Strategic Tenancy Policy (STP) outlines the Council's approach to offering new tenancy types, introduced in the Localism Act 2011. These tenancy types can be used for both Council and Housing Association allocations. Although the document will not be binding for Housing Associations it sets out the Council's preferred approach that it would like to see Housing Associations follow. The STP is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.3 A full consultation process was undertaken and completed following the H&C OSC and Cabinet reports in March 2012. The Tenants and Leaseholders Committee (TLC) was informed of the Council's duty to produce a STP on the 5th December 2011. The TLC was then also fully involved throughout the consultation process. An opportunity to take part in the consultation through the website was open to the public and there were additional tenant consultation events. The feedback received through the consultation is included in Part 3 of the STP.

2. Housing Principles

- 2.1 The Council has a number of Corporate Priorities with which the STP is consistent. In the early draft stages of the STP it was considered beneficial for the Council to have a stand-alone document setting out the principles underlying the Council's Strategic Housing direction, and thereby demonstrating how the Corporate Priorities are incorporated. The 'Housing Principles' that resulted from this work have since shaped the direction of the STP. The Principles are included in Part 1 of the STP for reference, and are illustrated below:



3. Strategic Tenancy Policy Consultation Draft

- 3.1 The STP Consultation Draft was approved by Cabinet in March 2012 following a discussion at the H&C OSC (also in March).
- 3.2 The Consultation Draft was made available to view online on the Council's website and distributed to a group of stakeholders, including the TLC and local Housing Association partners. A short questionnaire was made available for tenants to respond to as part of a tenant consultation 'road show'.
- 3.3 The majority of comments made in response to the consultation were positive (a summary of the consultation responses has been included in Part 3 of the STP document). The Council welcomed all feedback and is confident that the overall response supports its proposals. The consultation period has not resulted in any policy changes or amendments.
- 3.4 As the STP is a new policy the Council has decided to include three parts to the document:
 - Part 1 - Background information;
 - Part 2 - The Strategic Tenancy Policy; and
 - Part 3 - The consultation responses, monitoring and review.When the STP is reviewed in the future, Part 2 will become a stand-alone document in line with other Strategic Housing policy documents.
- 3.5 At the H&C OSC meeting on 5th December 2012 Members asked for the STP to be brought back to the next H&C OSC on 23rd January 2013 together with the draft Flexible Tenancy Review Procedure.
- 3.6 In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing it was agreed that the STP would still be recommended for adoption at the Cabinet meeting on 22nd January, and the final STP would then be provided to H&C OSC on 23rd January with the draft Flexible Tenancy Review Procedure for comments.
- 3.7 The Draft Flexible Tenancy Review Procedure has been devised to reflect the Flexible Tenancies (Review Procedures) Regulations 2012. The regulations require that, six months to a year prior to a Flexible Tenancy coming to an end, a social landlord must undertake a review of that tenancy to assess whether it should be renewed. If a tenancy is not to be renewed then the tenant must be notified of the decision and be given the opportunity to appeal at least six months before the tenancy comes to an end.
- 3.8 The regulations stipulate how an appeal hearing will be conducted and Section 7 Part 2 identifies who will conduct the hearing if an appeal is received.

7.—(1) The hearing must be conducted by a person appointed for that purpose by the landlord, who may be an officer or employee of the landlord.

(2) A person appointed under paragraph (1) who is an officer or employee of the landlord must be a person of greater seniority than the person who made the original decision.

APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC TENANCY POLICY

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To consider passing a resolution in the following terms:

That, under s.100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Part 1 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during the item in Part II of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Item 13).

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY: Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme 2012/13

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Type:	Contact details:	Background information
5 February 2013 <i>Joint OSC meeting</i>		Budget 2013-2014 Quarter 3 Financial Performance Data	Sc	S Marshall, Corporate Director Finance & Governance S Flynn, Assistant Director, Finance and Resources J Deane, Group Manager, Financial Services	
13 March 2013	1 March 2013	Old Town Hall	PM	S Railson, Arts Manager	
		Youth Connexions Presentation		Mohamed Fawzi, Youth Connexions, Herts County Council	
		Community Alarm Call Response Performance	PM	E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing Landlord	
		STAR Progress Report	PM	E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing Landlord C Leech, Team Leader, Policy & Participation	

PM – Performance management

PD – Policy Development

Sc – Scrutiny

Items to be scheduled:

- Update report on Supported Housing
- Update report on Tenant Involvement Strategy
- Review of Under Occupation
- Neighbourhood Action Group report
- Equalities Strategy
- Council House Building Programme & Homeless Hostel

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme 2013/14

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Type:	Contact details:	Background information
19 June 2013	7 June 2013	Quarter 4 Performance Report (& Q4 Operational Risk Reports)		E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services S Baker, Assistant Director, Legal, Democratic & Regulatory J Deane, Assistant Director, Finance and Resources	To review and scrutinise quarterly performance.
17 July 2013	5 July 2013				
11 September 2013	30 August 2013	Quarter 1 Performance Report (& Q1 Operational Risk Reports)	PM	E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services S Baker, Assistant Director, Legal, Democratic & Regulatory J Deane, Assistant Director, Finance and Resources	To review and scrutinise quarterly performance.

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Type:	Contact details:	Background information
13 November 2013	1 November 2013	Quarter 2 Performance Report (& Q2 Operational Risk Reports)	PM	E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services S Baker, Assistant Director, Legal, Democratic & Regulatory J Deane, Assistant Director, Finance and Resources	To review and scrutinise quarterly performance.
12 December 2013 <i>Joint OSC Meeting</i>		Budget 2014-2015 <i>No further items to be added</i>	Sc	S Marshall, Corporate Director, Finance & Governance	
29 January 2014	17 January 2014	Quarter 3 Performance Report (& Q3 Operational Risk Reports)	PM	E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services S Baker, Assistant Director, Legal, Democratic & Regulatory	To review and scrutinise quarterly performance

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Type:	Contact details:	Background information
5 February 2014 <i>Joint OSC meeting</i>		Budget 2014-2015 <i>No further items to be added</i>	Sc	S Marshall, Corporate Director Finance & Governance	
19 March 2014	7 March 2014				

PM – Performance management

PD – Policy Development

Sc – Scrutiny

Items to be scheduled:

- Update report on Supported Housing
- Update report on Tenant Involvement Strategy
- Review of Under Occupation
- Neighbourhood Action Group report
- Equalities Strategy
- Council House Building Programme and Homeless Hostel