



Report for:	<b>Housing &amp; Communities Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date of meeting:	<b>4<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>
PART:	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	<b>2020/21 Quarter 2 Performance Report, Service Plan Update &amp; Operational Risk Register – Housing</b>
Contact:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing  Author/Responsible Officer – Fiona Williamson – Assistant Director - Housing
Purpose of report:	1. To update the Committee on the Performance of the Housing Service - Quarter 2 2020/21  2. To inform the Committee on the progress of the 2020/21 Housing Service Plan and Operational Risk Register, including the COVID pandemic risk register.
Recommendations	That the Committee note the Performance Report, Service Plan and Operational and COVID Risk Register
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing – the provision of good quality affordable homes, by investing in existing stock and developing new.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>  All areas of the service are subject to Monthly Budget Monitoring Meetings with the HRA Financial Accountant. Budget Reporting is quarterly to Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
‘Value For Money Implications’	<u>Value for Money</u>  The Housing Service & its costs are reviewed annually through a national benchmarking organisation (Housemark)
Risk Implications	Housing Operational Risk Register details the risks associated

	with the management of the housing service. The Coronavirus Pandemic has been added to the operational risk register as the implications of Government restrictions on movement during lockdown and the ongoing guidance, has resulted in a number of risks to the management and delivery of services.
Equalities Implications	Community Impact Assessments are developed whenever there is a requirement to change or create a new policy or procedure or significant change to service delivery.
Health And Safety Implications	Health & Safety is an identified key risk for the Housing Service.
Consultees:	Mark Gaynor – Corporate Director, Housing and Regeneration Jason Grace – Group Manager Property and Place Natasha Beresford – Group Manager Strategic Housing Layna Warden – Group Manager Tenants and Leaseholders David Barrett – Group Manager, Housing Development
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>	In consultation with staff and members of the Tenants & Leaseholder Committee, a set of performance indicators are agreed, approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing. These indicators are monitored monthly and reported to the HCOSC quarterly. In addition, there are suites of contractual performance indicators used to monitor the performance of the contractors delivering the services and these are linked to their profit.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report and appendices:	TAM – Total Asset Management UC – Universal Credit ASB – Anti-Social Behaviour

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.0.1 This report details the performance of the Housing Service during the second quarter of 2020/21, against the suite of performance indicators. The performance indicators are extracted from Rocket, the performance-reporting tool, and contained in Appendix A.
- 1.0.2 The report also details the Housing Service Plan and Operational Risk Register. The Service Plan and Risk Register are reviewed quarterly and updated to reflect the progress against the various milestones and establish if there have been any changes to the risk rating or likelihood of occurrence of any of the risks. In order to reduce the potential of the risk occurring, various mitigations are in place to reduce the likelihood or severity of occurrence. The Service Plan and Risk Register are contained at Appendix B.
- 1.0.3 The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and ongoing restrictions aimed at reducing the spread of the virus, continues to negatively impact performance in a number of areas. There continues to be increased demand for support and need to work closely with tenants to enable them to sustain their tenancies and ongoing increased demand, in respect of homeless presentations.
- 1.0.4 The service has responded well to these challenges and a number of staff have been redeployed to assist in areas outside of their usual remit or have taken on some additional duties to maintain services.

## **2.0 Housing Performance Report – Q1 2020/21**

- 2.0.1 Appendix A shows performance against the 'Service Critical' performance indicators for the 2nd Quarter of 2020/21.
- 2.0.2 **Performance Highlights**
- 2.0.3 The backlog of repairs, which had built up during the first phase of the pandemic, have been worked through and of the 1400 that were in the system 1171 have been completed and the remainder allocated for inspection or planned works. The need to address both the backlog repairs, whilst continuing to complete the new repairs, has resulted in a reduction in the number of new repairs being completed within target, but as the backlog has been reduced it is expected that this will improve over the next few months.
- 2.0.3 Satisfaction with planned works remains high and the majority of works that are currently being undertaken are external, which reduces the disruption for the household and the risk of infection spread, should either party have asymptomatic COVID.
- 2.0.4 The gas servicing compliance has remained high throughout the quarter and in September 100% compliance was achieved, which demonstrates the ongoing commitment from the team and contractor, Sun Realm, to ensuring all gas appliances are serviced within the statutory timeframes.
- 2.0.5 There continues to be an increased number of cases managed by the Tenancy Sustainment Team this quarter. Those in temporary accommodation and some tenants in settled homes receive targeted support to ensure that those individuals with complex needs are able to effectively manage their license or tenancies. Cases

are reviewed 6 months after they are closed to allow us to check on lasting improvements and in Q2 100% of tenants were still maintaining their homes effectively. This is an excellent result and shows that early intervention can improve independence in tenants to prevent rent arrears, ASB, poor conditioned properties and ultimately evictions.

2.0.6 The homeless service continued to work with significantly higher volumes of presentations as there was a continuation of the need to bring all clients (where possible) into accommodation. In Q2 there was an increase of 85.5% of households presenting to the service due to being homeless or at risk of homelessness, and this resulted in 51% increase in temporary accommodation placements compared to the same period in 2019. This is despite the extension of the prevention of evictions, meaning households at risk of losing a social housing or private sector tenancy were not approaching the council, which has provided some respite, however it is expected that this will see a further peak in demand on the service. Due to the requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act and the number of tasks that need to be undertaken Officers caseloads increased by 60%, with average caseloads across 6 Homeless Prevention Officers at 70 cases, as a consequence additional agency staff have had to be recruited to ensure that the statutory function can be maintained.

2.0.7 Although the service has had significant challenges during the Q2 period, it has been successful in preventing the need to use Bed & Breakfast accommodation during this time. The service has continued to work in partnership with DENS and the Dacorum Outreach Team and this has meant that there has not been an increase in rough sleeping during this time. Additionally there has been a continued focus on ensuring that households with Complex Needs can be supported, the service has worked closely with Hertfordshire housing colleagues and has co-led a response to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taking to supporting the 1400 households in temporary accommodation across the County. This has led to the formation of a Multi-Disciplinary process being established, which has reviewed all clients placed into accommodation or supported during the period and targeted action plans being developed. This approach has been vital given that over 50% of the clients in accommodation have Complex Needs, with the main categories in Dacorum being; mental health, fleeing violence or a domestic abuse, history of repeat homelessness and Offending history.

2.0.8 The satisfaction with the outcome of ASB cases was 100% during Q2 and this was despite an increase in cases during the lockdown period, when more people were constantly at home.

### 2.1.0 **Performance challenges**

2.1.1 The refurbishment work to empty properties was recommenced during Q2 and focused upon general needs, as there was a higher demand, from those awaiting a transfer prior to lockdown and as move on accommodation for some of the households in TA. There was a backlog of properties that required work, and furloughed staff were remobilised but the supply chain took up to three weeks to get back to the delivery capacity prior to lockdown which resulted in delays getting works commenced in some of these properties. Additionally, one of the new build schemes, Magenta Court was completed and ready to let in September, which resulted in the letting of 29 new homes, which are not included in the empty homes

performance figures. New build properties can result in a decline in bidding on other empty properties, which can further impact the key to key times.

- 2.1.2 The performance of the lifeline call service declined below the target level, with 96.3% of calls being answered within 60 seconds. The supported housing officers recommenced face to face visits on the 10<sup>th</sup> August and visited all tenants during the remainder of the quarter. During these visits all lifelines were checked and some required resetting. The decline in performance has been addressed with Tunstall's senior management team who are working to rectify this decline, as the importance of the reliability of the lifeline during the pandemic, is essential to provide confidence especially to a number of elderly residents who have been self-isolating.
- 2.1.3 Rent collection continued to decline further since the last report, when it stood at 97.91%. In Q2 the figure had reduced to 96.63%. The increase in the number of UC applicants and those receiving reduced salary through the furlough scheme has resulted in a number of households experiencing difficulties paying their rent. The income team continue to have provide advice and support to reduce the potential for these tenants to fall into arrears.

### **3.0 Interventions to address performance below target and other initiatives**

- 3.0.1 The approach to reducing the backlog repairs has been positive, but there remains a number of areas of performance with the remobilisation of the Osborne TAM contract that are taking longer than anticipated to get back to full capacity. This is being reflected in the increase in the number of escalations back to the Council from tenants awaiting more major repairs. An operations meeting was held with the new Managing Director of Osbornes property services, to highlight the areas where improvements are required, so that these can be addressed. The next Strategic Core Group meeting is due on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, when a full performance report will be presented by Osbornes to outline the interventions that they have implemented to improve service delivery.
- 3.0.2 The action plan, developed following the process review by Sopra Steria has been agreed by the various parties involved in the empty homes process. The timescales for implementation of any quick wins have been established and delivery and impact on key to key times will be monitored over the forthcoming months.
- 3.0.3 Additional contractors have been commissioned to undertake work to the empty homes to increase the numbers that are completed and available for advert.
- 3.0.4 The review of the supported housing sheltered schemes has provided evidence around the demand, supply and desirability of each of the Category 2 schemes and this will be used to develop a strategy for the management and interventions needed at some sites, so the supply more accurately reflects the demand. Currently there are 141 empty sheltered properties in the voids process and only 100 applicants on the housing register who have indicated a preference for a sheltered property. A number of schemes are advertised on multiple cycles, before they are re-let, which is negatively impacting the key to key times.

### **4.0 Housing Service Plan & Operational Risk Register**

- 4.0.1 The updated 2020/21 Housing Service Plan and Operational Risk Register are contained in Appendix B. The COVID risk register is contained in Appendix C.

