

Report for:	Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny AGENDA
Date of meeting:	01 September 2021
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	2019/20 Quarter 4 Performance Report, Service Plan Update & Operational Risk Register – Housing
Contact:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Author/Responsible Officer – Fiona Williamson – Assistant Director – Housing
Purpose of report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To update the Committee on the Performance of the Housing Service - Quarter 1 2020/21. 2. To inform the Committee on the progress of the 2020/21 Housing Service Plan and Operational Risk Register
Recommendations	That the Committee note the Performance Report, Service Plan and Operational 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.
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 Oli Jackson – 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:	TLC – Tenants & Leaseholder Committee SIE – Strategy, Improvement and Engagement Team CMT – Corporate Management Team TAM – Total Asset Management IT – Introductory tenancy UC – Universal Credit CA – Citizens Advice DWP – Department for Work and Pensions CPN – Community Protection Notice HRA – Housing Revenue Account TAM – Total Asset Management ASB – Anti-Social Behaviour HMO – Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 1.0.1 This report details the performance of the Housing Service during the first quarter of 2021/22, 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 regularly 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. Following the new corporate approach to service planning for 2021/22, the Housing Service have carried forward the previous service plan objectives and are working closely across the service to develop a new 3 year plan to commence from 2022/23. 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 As we move into the first quarter of 2021/22 the service has embraced the changing Covid guidance and transition to stepping down of restrictions, which has enabled the start of return to business as usual activity and commencement of recovery from the pandemic.
- 1.0.4 Homeless presentations remained high and as a direct result this increased the number of households requiring support from the welfare support officers. The table below gives an indication of demand on the service for the last 12 months in comparison with the previous year. The pandemic has seen a significant impact on the homeless and welfare support service, with further impact still expected as a direct result of the pandemic, there is not likely to be an immediate reduction in demand.

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Year	Approaches	Yearly % comparisons	Temporary accommodation placements	Yearly % comparisons
April 2019 to March 2020	1806	53.7% increase	208	135% increase

1.0.5 The implementation of the Domestic Abuse (DA) Act in April 2021 and the amended homeless eligibility criteria linked to this in July 2021 has also seen an increase in presentations to the council as a result of DA, a focussed action plan has been developed and is being co-ordinated pan council by the Group Manager, Strategic Housing. The service continued to respond well to the additional workload and changes to some of the methods of service delivery and in most areas performance remained within or above target.

2.0 Housing Performance Report – Q1 2021/22

2.0.1 Appendix A shows performance against the 'Service Critical' performance indicators for the first Quarter of 2021/22.

2.0.2 **Performance Highlights:** The Private Rented Sector (PRS) team continue to work closely with the homeless prevention team and in quarter 1 have increased the number of licensed Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the borough and also identified several unauthorised HMO's for which potential legal action is being considered. In addition the number of households whose homelessness has been prevented has increased, which has led to a reduction in placements into temporary accommodation during the period.

2.0.3 The PRS team have returned fully to business as usual with physical inspections being undertaken. HMO's licensed has increased from 103 at the end of quarter 4 this year to 104 with 29 new applications pending processing.

2.0.4 There has been an increase in time to let adapted properties to 151 days in the last period. This is due to limited supply chain availability which is being monitored by all key stake holders, compelled with DBC resource availability which has now been addressed.

2.0.5 The tenancy sustainment team have been under increasing pressure throughout the pandemic with a number of households and individuals requiring additional support to be able to sustain their tenancies. In addition the team are gearing up to receive their tenth Syrian refugee household to resettle and two households via the Afghan Locally Employed settlement scheme.

2.0.6 99.43% emergency repairs were attended to within the 4 hour target and the quality of planned works remained high, albeit that there has been a reduction in the volume of planned works as the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms remained suspended in quarter 1.

2.0.7 The gas servicing compliance, although amber, remained high at 99.96% throughout the quarter and any overdue cases were managed through the tenancy team and with the support of the contractor, Sun Realm.

2.0.8 The rent collection levels have remained above target in the quarter and increased since quarter three, which is a very positive result, as many of our tenants have had some negative impact on their household income during the Pandemic. The outturn position for the year end was positive with only 3.9% arrears on the total rent due, which is considerably better than the forecast of 5% that was anticipated at the end of the first quarter.

2.0.9 The number rough sleepers in the borough has been reduced to 3 following focussed intervention and collaborative working with the Community Safety Partnership. The Strategic Housing Service has been successful in securing funding via Ministry for Housing

Communities and Local Government to employ an Ex Offender Housing Navigator in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council and Emerging Futures.

- 2.1.0 The number of cases where the team have been able to prevent homelessness has increased in the last quarter to 43 with successful joint work across Homeless Prevention and Private Sector Housing teams to consider all options to ensure that, where possible, people are supported to remain in accommodation or alternative private sector accommodation is obtained.
- 2.1.0 The housing development, Corn Mill Court, at Swing Gate Lane in Berkhamsted received an award from the Hertfordshire Association of Architects for the conservation work carried out on the properties fronting the high street. This is the second award the scheme has received, as it was also recognised by the local Berkhamsted Citizens association in 2020.
- 3.0.1 **Performance challenges:** The percentage of non-urgent repairs completed in target has reduced since previous quarter to 92%. The reasons for this are due to the pandemic and current labour shortfalls within the construction industry and which is further compounded by shortages of building materials across the Country. This is being managed and monitored with DBC's partners and supply chain.
- 3.0.2 There are still challenges with the re-letting of sheltered accommodation, which has improved but still at 49.09% being let in target, it is hoped a series of open days will increase take up of accommodation and further consideration as to the future of less in demand schemes, will be considered via the sheltered housing review.
- 3.0.3 There continue to be issues with performance of the lifeline call service, with the number of calls being answered within 60 seconds below target at 93.67%. The third month in the quarter, March did show an upward trajectory in improved performance, which is positive and there is close monitoring of this importance service.
- 3.0.4 The time taken to respond to some of the stage 1 complaints was above target and this has improved during this period. The service is currently in the process of recruiting to a dedicated Complaints Officer post, which is hoped will further improve this performance.

4.0 Interventions to address performance below target and other initiatives

- 4.0.1 The performance issues, which have been identified with the Osborne contract have been escalated in line with the contract. A new contracts manager has been appointed by Osborne, following a joint interview process with officers from the Council and a 12 week improvement plan is being agreed. A Partnership Charter has been developed to address the areas of performance and reinforce the behaviours that are expected, to ensure there is a stronger focus on customer experience. The improvement plan will be closely monitored by the senior management team at the Council and is expected to result in improved performance across all areas of the contract.
- 4.0.2 The review of supported housing schemes has identified a few schemes that are less desirable and require further consideration as to next steps. A report will be presented to the Housing Senior Management Team in October, before further discussion with regards to potential options with Senior Leadership Team and Portfolio Holder Chief Officer Group. In addition the Housing Allocations Policy review is in its final stages and will be presented to Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in October, with proposals to revise the capital income thresholds for sheltered housing applicants.
- 4.0.3 The lifeline service provided by Tunstall is a key service for tenants who rely on having the reassurance of assistance should they fall or become unwell. A meeting has been held, with the Director of Response at Tunstall, to review the performance and establish what measures are being put in place to address the response times. A number of their staff who were required to shield have now been able to return to work and with the continued roll out of the vaccination programme they anticipate to be operating at full capacity in June. The

performance is being closely monitored and is showing an improvement of just over 2% in April to 96.11%.

5.0 Housing Service Plan & Operational Risk Register

- 5.0.1 The updated 2020/21 Housing Service Plan and Operational Risk Register are contained in Appendix B.