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Report for:	Housing & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Q2 2023-2024 Housing Performance Report
Date:	7 th November 2023
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Simy Dhyani Portfolio Holder Housing and Property Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	N/A
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

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Corporate Priorities	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and Ecological Emergency - working to deliver net zero carbon.</p>
Wards affected	All wards
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide members with an overview of the performance of the Housing Service for Q2 2023-24 2. To present the interventions and actions undertaken to address any performance concerns
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That members consider the report and scrutinise the actions to address any performance concerns highlighted
Period for post policy/project review:	Quarterly performance reporting

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 This report details the performance of the Housing & Property Services during the second quarter of 2023/24, measured against the suite of performance indicators.
- 1.2 Performance is reviewed on a monthly basis via InPhase reports, which provide an overview of the housing service. The Operational Risk Registers are also reviewed by the relevant teams at least quarterly, to reflect any changes internally or externally that have impacted upon the identified risks and to include new risks. Robust mitigations are in place to reduce the risk's likelihood and severity.
- 1.3 This report also outlines any newly arising service pressures and feedback to Members on action taken to address matters arising.

2. The aims of this paper

- To improve service performance within the directorate
- To ensure resident centric services are delivered
- To drive service delivery improvements

- To increase efficiency and focus
- Improve the customer experience
- Ensure appropriate scrutiny of the services delivered

3. The Current Position on Performance

At **Appendix A** there is the In-Phase report on performance, **Appendix B** is our latest compliance position, **Appendix C** is our TSM improvement plan; and links are provided to our HouseMark data (section 4).

Repairs and Complaints management are two of the most challenging areas. There is improvement work underway in both areas and this will be kept under strict supervision to demonstrate improvements.

4. In-Phase Departmental Scorecard

This can be seen at Appendix A

There are 2 'red' indicators for Rent Collected as a percentage of rent owed (excluding current arrears brought forward), and the percentage of responsive repairs completed right first time. Both are detailed below under 'High Risk' areas of the business.

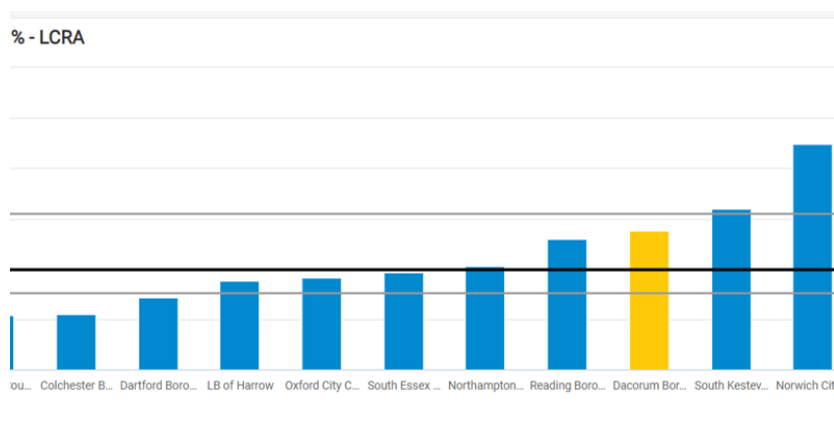
The suite of measures is under review. Work is underway to help triangulate key service information around Performance, Quality and Satisfaction. This will be fed into future reports as this develops.

5. High Risks Areas

Income Collection.

The business plan is dependent upon the income collected. The largest contributor is rent (and to a lesser extent service charges). Given the income is broadly £60M, a 1% reduction in arrears provides a one-off benefit of c.£600,000.

We have collected 96.52% of the due rent as at the end of Sept 23, against a target of 99%. Our performance compared to others can be seen below:



The percentage of arrears collected is lower at this time of year due to the negative impact of no rent free weeks between May and December. Regular monthly payers may find themselves in arrears at the end of these months, leading to Christmas, as the rent being charged over a longer

period than the 4 week monthly payment they are making. A truer reflection of arrears will be after the 2 rent free weeks at Christmas. The performance is stronger than this time last year.

Compliance (including RAACS, Damp & Mould and Disrepair)

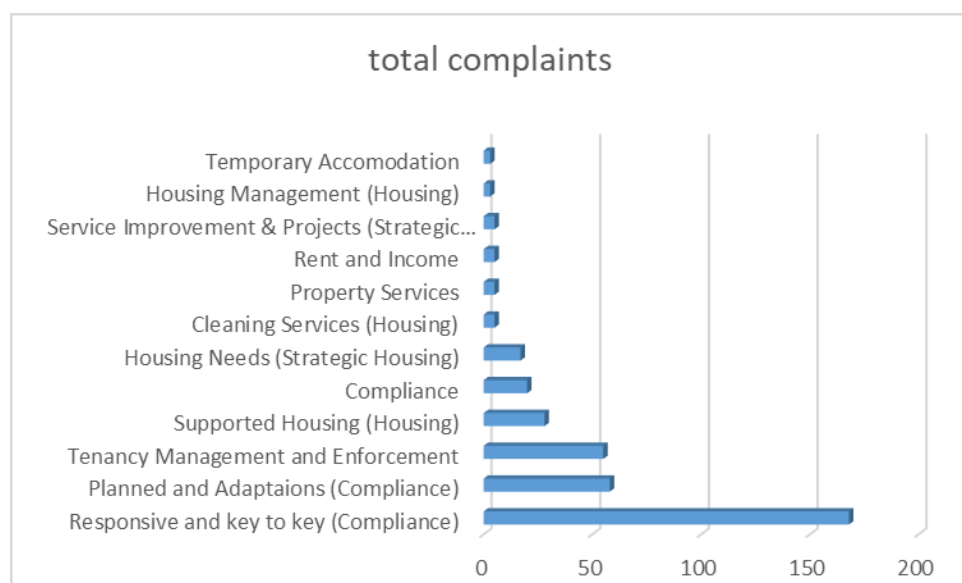
The latest compliance report (Appendix B) demonstrates very good performance on certification and inspection.

Attention is focused on ensuring this strong performance continues and ensuring all arising remedial actions are completed.

Complaints

The key performance metrics are detailed below:

Team	total complaints
Responsive and key to key	168
Planned and Adaptaions	58
Tenancy Management and Enforcement	55
Supported Housing (Housing)	28
Compliance	20
Housing Needs (Strategic Housing)	17
Cleaning Services (Housing)	5
Property Services	5
Rent and Income	5
Service Improvement & Projects (Strategic Housing)	5
Housing Management (Housing)	3
Temporary Accomodation	3



The SQA Team are reviewing all the Q1 and Q2 complaint responses and have started highlighting ways to improve them and will support other teams deliver more consistently. The team will also assist improve complaint tracking and recording the lessons learnt.

Repairs.

The TSM results and monthly transactional surveys are disappointing, as seen below:



The transactional surveys are the best indicator of the likelihood of the TSM figures improving in the future. However, the latest monthly figures are pretty close to the TSM perception scores. The area of responsive repairs is very challenging, Osborne Property Services Ltd (OPSL) have introduced team structure changes to improve accountability and improve service outcomes for our customers. Additionally we have also introduced a jointly agreed service improvement plan to focus on areas of improvement. The service improvement plan is reviewed each week at operational meetings and progress reported monthly.

6. Our Performance compared to others

It is important to measure our performance against our peers, not just against our own targets. We are a member of HouseMark (a bench marking club for social housing nationally), to do this. There is naturally a lag in data as HouseMark collects it in from members and then goes through a process of quality assurance.

[HouseMark Q1 Executive Summary.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[Housing & Property Services Directorate - Appendix A- Monthly Pulse Quarterly Summary 2023-24 Q1 - Dacorum Borough Council.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

The above highlights the challenges faced by DBC, again in particular for both complaint handling and repair satisfaction.

7 Performance highlights

Housing Operations

7.1 The average time spent in temporary accommodation has been reducing throughout the quarter, although the numbers in B&B have now increased to 23. The service is proactively working with Hertfordshire district colleagues and internal departments to track temporary accommodation

demands, in addition to identify early intervention opportunities with the aim of preventing temporary accommodation placements.

7.2 The time taken to re-let empty homes has decreased to 34 days following targeted management improvements. The Housing Needs team continues to work alongside other internal departments such as Empty Homes and Lettings and ensuring the advertising and allocation process does not impact the key to key process. In the last quarter, for general needs DBC properties, 100% of allocation was made before the property was ready to let. On average in the last quarter, from the 'keys in' email to the offer being made, it took the Housing Needs team 6.76 working days to complete a general needs allocation. Further work will be progressed across departments to further identify opportunities to improve our approach with the aim of positively impacting the void turnaround time.

Safe Communities

7.3 At the end of September 23 we were managing 12 cases of Anti-Social Behaviour. This has reduced since the summer which is a seasonal trend.

7.4 The average waiting time for initial Triage appointments has reduced from a month to a week due to additional resource being increased at the front end of the process.

7.5 The Private Sector Housing team have continued to have success in tackling rogue landlords across the sector, this has been supported by the approval of a new Enforcement Policy at Cabinet. The team is working collaboratively with Property colleagues to review our approach to damp and mould, which will see the development of a refreshed website and information point for all residents to support tackling of this area.

Asset Management

7.6 As at September 23, 89% of all repairs were being completed within timescale. This is short of the target of 97% and an improvement plan is being worked through with the contractor. There are some signs of improvement with the contractors' new Contract Manager as the percentage of repairs completed right first time is 85% in September, compared to 78% in the previous month and the target is 86%.

7.7 The average time to re-let a HRA property continues to perform well and is also well below the current Housemark median and just above quartile 1 performance. Although performance is strong the associated costs are high due to the condition of the properties received and the extent of works required.

Safe Homes

7.8 The latest compliance report (Appendix B) demonstrates very good performance on certification and inspection across all areas.

7.9 Of particular note is the satisfactory EICR performance indicator 99.17%. Although this indicator is Amber and will fluctuate due to the challenges of gaining access without legislative support, the number of properties without a certificate is now only 6. These are the most challenging properties to gain access into, however every effort to gain access to complete the inspection and arising works will continue including legal intervention as required.

8 Performance challenges

Housing Operations

8.1 The number of estate inspections is back on track and new indicators are required to score the inspections. This will give a clearer view of the general conditions on our estates and will be available in Quarter 3.

8.2 There were 2 evictions in September 23 for rent arrears. There is a correlation between increasing arrears levels and eviction. However, we work hard to prevent evictions and the sustainment team will assist any tenant needing help which can range from referrals to other agencies, assistance with benefits, budgeting or making payment arrangements.

8.3 The number of households in B&B's has increased over the quarter to 23. Unfortunately there are limited adapted properties and none that are currently with the Empty Homes Team. It is likely that the households waiting for wheelchair adapted properties will be in B&B accommodation for some time.

8.4 The cost of B&B's increased significantly from April to May due to the large number of temporary accommodation referrals that came through on the day accommodation was required. Working across the Homeless Prevention team to ensure all referrals are made in a timely manner to prevent homeless on the day placements in B&B unnecessarily and also with the Empty Homes team to ensure all temporary accommodation properties are returned as soon as possible. Proactive forecasting and tracking of placements, will enable a planned approach to delivery of temporary accommodation and intention to reduce placements where possible. As temporary accommodation is driven by demand (increased homelessness approaches) it is also important to ensure sufficient supply of accommodation and steps are being taken to deliver additional units of accommodation through our capital programme and the local authority housing fund.

Safe Communities

8.5 The number of incidents of Dacorum High Risk Domestic Abuse cases heard at the Multi-Agency Conference has increased to 51 from the previous quarter where the number was 35 cases. Through our commitment to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation, the service continues to identify opportunity to raise awareness and work across the Community Safety Partnership to tackle incidences of Domestic Abuse.

8.6 In May, there was a big jump in homelessness applications which could be due to the increase we have seen in Section 21 notices being issued, however additional impacts sighted at application stage also include, rising cost of living and relationship breakdown. The service is undergoing transformation, with a new toolkit developed for prevention staff to support in prevention and intervention with cases. Additional resource has also been stood up to ease the pressure of potential increased applications from asylum and Ukraine cohorts.

The Homeless Prevention Team are currently looking into their data collection to ensure that there are no discrepancies. This is also part of the Service Improvement Plan.

8.7 The Community Safety Team are working across the Housing Operations service to review our approach to handling anti-social behavior management and to develop a new policy, ensuring that we are aligned with new guidance and the tenant satisfaction measures.

Asset Management

8.8 The percentage of responsive repairs completed first time is challenging due to the nature of reporting and raising a repair. To elaborate, the repair is raised based on what a customer reports, this can often lead to the initial visit resulting in further visits once the issue has been assessed by the trades person.

8.9 There is an improvement plan in place to improve the repairs service, which can be tracked via the percentage of repairs that are completed within target, and transactional satisfaction results.

Housing Operations

8.10 The Tenancy Management team have now defined the estate inspections into neighbourhoods to create a more robust inspection regime, which is seeing supported focussed activity in specific neighbourhoods by way of targeted improvement plans and pilots, which will inform the transformation programme.

9.Risks

The Operational Risk Register has been revised and aligned with the performance information, management information and service plans.

Certain key functions are outsourced to OPSL. There is a lack of central oversight of their customer care performance. We will include their average call handling times, the range of answering times and some evidence of the quality they provide for the Quarter 3 report.

There is a Regulatory risk given the low scores in complaint handling and repairs. Although there are improvement plans in place, there is no immediate improvements showing in the monthly transactional data.

10. Financial and Value for Money implications

As members will be aware the impact of the pandemic, inflation and interest rates have significantly impacted the sector and we are experiencing unprecedented price increases across all areas of Council activity. This fiscal impact is compounded in key areas by the lack of skilled people and materials driving continued escalation of costs. These two factors alone will create a significant cost pressure on available budgets.

This is being fed into the 24/25 business plan, along with other demands to assess the impact on current and future budgets and detailing what additional mitigating actions may need to be introduced.

11. Legal Implications

The Housing Service are required to comply with all statutory and regulatory legislation relating to the delivery of the Housing Operations and Strategic Housing Service. This includes the statutory functions for management of Compliance activity, Homelessness and interim (temporary) accommodation, Housing Allocations, Strategy and Private Sector Housing. This also includes the regulatory functions for the consumer standards and rent setting.

12. Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights

Community and equality Impact Assessments are developed whenever there is a requirement to change or create a new policy or procedure or significant change to service delivery

Human Rights – There are a number of services that are provided to tenants, residents and leaseholders which involve entering their homes. The policies adopted by the Council are subject to consultation or oversight to make sure that the right to respect for private and family life is considered and balanced against other landlord responsibilities for health and safety.

13. Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

Investment programmes are contained within the HRA Business Plan and an element of budget provision has been allocated to future stock sustainability. The performance report includes the responsibilities of the Housing Service in relation to community safety and the health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable tenants and residents.

14. Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

The HRA and general fund stock management of the asset is undertaken across the housing service. In line with the HTIP further work is underway to develop a stock investment review process and programme, which will inform future investment decisions.

The management of health and safety related matters are reported into the Corporate Health and Safety Working Group.

15. Conclusions:

This report provides an overview of service performance and interventions implemented to address key areas of performance. Key performance challenges will be subject to ongoing monitoring via the Housing Services Leadership Team, ensuring a collaborative approach to service delivery and ongoing performance.

16. Next steps

1. Better utilise HouseMark data. Currently we input data monthly for the pulse reports and annually for the yearly performance reporting. We will now input our TSM results Quarterly to HouseMark, to improve benchmarking.
2. To share this report with HTIP to help ensure their improvement plans are designed to meet the continuing and emerging needs of the business.
3. To agree if this report covers the main issues or if additional elements need adding in the future.