

HOUSING COMMITTEE	Agenda Item 28
	Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Housing Committee workplan progress update and Housing performance report - Quarter 1 2021/22		
Date of Meeting:	22 September 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Ododo Dafé	Tel: 01273 293201
	Email:	ododo.dafe@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 This report illustrates progress against Housing Committee work plan 2019-23 priorities and targets, as well as other Housing service targets. The report covers Quarter 1 of the 2021/22 financial year, and is attached as Appendix 1.

1.2 Information highlights from the quarter include:

- **Customer feedback** – 73 compliments received from customers, and 81% of stage one complaints responded to within 10 working days
- **Private sector housing** – 52.4% of Houses in Multiple Occupation have met all special conditions (for licences issued over 12 months ago)
- **Major adaptations** – waiting times for applications were 23.6 weeks for private sector homes, and 7.9 weeks for council homes
- **Housing needs** – 2,113 households placed in temporary accommodation
- **Council housing management** – 96.38% of rent collected and 108 council homes were re-let in an average of 88 days
- **Council housing repairs and maintenance** – 97.7% of emergency repairs were completed within 24 hours and 69.7% of routine repairs were completed within 28 days.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Housing Committee notes the report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The report uses red, amber and green traffic light symbols to provide an indication of performance, and also trend arrows to provide an indication of movement from the previous quarter.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION:

- 4.1 This report went to Area Panels in August 2021 for residents to comment and enquire upon. Additional commentary has been included following queries and feedback from residents and councillors.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The financial implications are contained in the report. An area of performance with significant financial effect is the ability to collect rents from tenants as well as the impact of the length of time that properties are empty. Over the last two years the percentage of rent collected has fallen in the HRA, and although the performance still compares favourably when benchmarked against other stock holding councils around the country, this is of concern and a review is underway to identify actions that will help to improve this. The collection of rents at 15.1 show that in Quarter 1, 2021/22, there has been a small 0.02% decrease in the collection of rents. It is noticeable that 70% of the rent arrears are for tenants in receipt of Universal Credit as shown in 15.4. This will need addressing for the service to get back to anything like the 2018/19 collection rate of 97.8%. An improvement of 0.1% increase in collection equates to approximately £53,000 more rental income in 2021/22.
- 5.2 Having empty properties extends the time those on the Housing Register are waiting for council housing and increases the costs incurred on temporary accommodation in the general fund. It is therefore imperative re-let times are improved going forward so that the HRA can maximise its rental income, reduce waiting times and reduce the costs of temporary accommodation in the general fund. On average, one empty property costs the HRA an estimated £93 per week in lost rent and also £22 per week in council tax. Indicator 15.15 shows that the average relet time has reduced from 105 last quarter to 88 days for Quarter 1. This indicates that properties are being let more quickly which is good news as shown by increase in the number of lets per quarter.
- 5.3 Although the number of re-lets per quarter is approaching pre-pandemic levels those which are being let have already been empty for long periods of time. Recovery efforts to tackle the backlog of empty council homes include using approved procurement routes to increase contractor capacity and large-scale recruitment of new permanent staff who can carry out works directly. Therefore this should improve this performance as the year progresses. Last quarter there were 311 empty council homes by the end of March 2021. For this quarter, the number of empty properties (indicator 15.17 & 15.18) has reduced slightly to 301 empty properties although the indicator shows there are 274 general needs and seniors' properties empty. This

compares to 78 as at March 2020 and so there is more work to do to address this backlog. Costs will be monitored as part of the monthly Targeted Budget Management (TBM) process.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks Date: 3/9/21

Legal Implications:

- 5.2. There are no significant legal implications arising from this regular progress and performance report.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 08/09/2021

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The average energy efficiency rating of council homes stands at 68.0 (out of a maximum of 100) and efforts to increase this rating contribute towards the council's sustainability commitments and help to reduce fuel poverty.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report. Cases of anti-social behaviour involving criminal activity are worked on in partnership with the police and other agencies.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no direct risk and opportunity implications arising from this report.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 A large number of services were stopped or significantly impacted in March 2020 in order to comply with Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions.

Corporate or Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 There are no direct corporate or citywide implications arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Housing Committee workplan progress update and Housing performance report - Quarter 1 2021/22

Background Documents:

None