

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Agenda Item 39

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Housing Management Performance Report (Quarter 1)
Date of Meeting: 27 September 2010
Report of: Acting Director of Housing
Contact Officer: Name: John Austin Locke Tel: 29-1008
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Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 This is the Quarter 1 report for Housing Management performance for the year 2010-2011.

1.2 As a result of a review of benchmarking by HouseMark and the introduction of a new single National Club comparative data is not available in the format used to date. How best this new data might inform future reports is being investigated and will be commented upon in the Quarter 2 report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Housing Management Consultative Committee comment on the contents of this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1.0 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

Indicator	Past performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future targets	
				10/11	11/12
BV66a Rent Collection	98.16%	98.29%	98.37%	98.68%	98.86%
BV66a Rent Collection (Central housing area)	98.35%	98.32%	98.37%	99.03%	99.24%
BV66a Rent Collection (East housing area)	97.73%	98.00%	98.15%	98.13%	98.25%
BV66a Rent Collection (North housing area)	98.35%	98.47%	98.48%	98.82%	98.96%
BV66a Rent Collection (West housing area)	98.43%	98.47%	98.56%	99.12%	99.32%
BV66a Rent Collection (Temp. Acc.)	97.07%	98.65%	94.42%	96.95%	Not set
BV66b Those with arrears of more than 7 weeks	6.40%	4.91%	4.15%	4.13%	3.72%
BV66c The NOSP figure	30.35%	26.97%	7.42%	23.80%	22.39%
BV66d The eviction figure (% tenants evicted for rent arrears)	0.16%	0.12%	0.02%	less than 35 evictions per annum: 0.29%	
% rent lost due to voids	1.33%	2.05%	2.10%	To be set	
Total former tenant arrears (exclusive of Temporary Accommodation)	£784,753	£780,280	£674,487	£650,000	£625,000
% Collection rate for former tenant arrears	28.70%	22.88%	16.14%	20%	20%
% of Write-offs for former tenant arrears	18.66%	9.30%	2.36%	To be set	
Total recharge debt	£95,884	£190,138	£191,648	£272,110	
% Collection rate for recharges	31.26%	19.63%	13.13%	20%	
% Leaseholder recovery rate	80%	84%	67%	85%	85%
% Leaseholder recovery rate on recoverable arrears	90%	92%	Not collected quarterly	90%	90%

3.1.1 Rent Collection and Current Arrears

BVPI66a

The collection rate continues to improve and the forecast at the end of June 2010 was 98.37% compared to 98.16% at the end of Quarter 1 2009/10.

BVPI66b

At the end of Quarter 1 2010/11 the percentage of tenants with more than seven weeks arrears was 4.15%, a reduction of 1.49% since Quarter 1 2009/10.

BVPI66c

Between April and June 2010 the number of tenants served with a Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP) was 199. The continuous improvement in the collection rate demonstrates the effectiveness of prompt action in the prevention of arrears.

BVPI66d

At the same time the eviction rate remained low with only three households being evicted for rent arrears in Quarter 1 2010/11, the same number of as were evicted in Quarter 1 of 2009/10.

3.1.2 Former Tenant Arrears

There has been a further reduction of £105,793 in former tenant arrears since the end of March 2010 resulting in a Quarter 1 collection rate of 16.14%.

3.1.3 Recharges

The amount of recharge debt raised between April 2010 and June 2010 was £38,134 which represents an additional 55 cases which were recharged for the cost of repairs due to deliberate damage or neglect and with an average recharge debt of £649.

Since the financial year 2009/2010 there has been a substantially increased focus on recharging where appropriate. This has been brought about by an improved understanding with the contractor on items that should be recharged. There has been an increase in the amount collected between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 from £30,000 to £37,000. However this improved figure is set against an increase in the overall debt owed in respect of recharges brought about by a more vigorous approach to recharging former tenants' for damage and expense incurred because of their actions. We will continue to work with contractors to ensure that such expenses are recharged appropriately and not accepted as a debt to the repairs budget. At the same time we will continue to develop our methods of collection to maximise recovery.

3.1.4 Percentage leaseholder recovery rate on gross debt

3.1.5 The gross collection rate includes all arrears including historic debt, amounts where payment arrangements have been agreed, disputed charges and cases where legal recovery is taking place. The 84% collection rate in 2009/10 was the best collection rate we have recorded. The 67% rate reported for Quarter 1 is the start of a process through the whole year – a quarter's figure in terms of leaseholders service charge arrears cannot be compared with the end-of-year recovery rate. The collection rate in general can be affected quite seriously by the level of major works charges levied during the course of the period.

3.1.6 Percentage leaseholder recoverable arrears

3.1.7 'Recoverable arrears' omits debts where payment arrangements or charging orders have been made, those that are formally in dispute, or where legal recovery action is being taken. This figure is only calculated annually.

3.2.0 Sheltered Housing

3.2.1 Annual Support Plans

3.2.2 Every resident should have a personalised support plan, reviewed each year by their scheme manager.

Total Data	Target	Current Quarter April – June 2010	Last Quarter Jan-March 2010
% people with an up to date support plan	100%	76.5%	76%
% people who decline a support plan	0%	4%	4%

3.2.3 There has been a period of recruitment of new Scheme Managers and in addition staffing levels have been increased at the four largest schemes; Elwyn Jones Court, Leach Court, Laburnham Grove and Somerset Point. Further recruitment of staff is also anticipated and this will allow us to improve further on the percentages above.

3.2.4 Every new resident should have a personalised support plan, completed within 21 days of moving into their home by their Scheme Manager. There has been an increase in performance in this area. Support planning remains a key priority for sheltered housing, particularly for new residents.

	Target	Current Quarter April – June 2010	Last Quarter Jan-March 2010
% new residents with a support plan completed within 21 days	100%	79%	53%

3.2.5 During this period customer satisfaction slips were returned as follows:

How satisfied are you with the following? (returns)	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Support Planning (30)	15 (50%)	10 (33%)	2 (7%)		3 (10%)
Helpfulness of Staff (36)	25 (69%)	7 (19%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Social Activities (31)	14 (45%)	8 (26%)	5 (16%)	3 (3%)	1 (3%)
Scheme Appearance (35)	16 (46%)	14 (40%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	
Garden Appearance (33)	14 (42%)	11 (33%)	4 (12%)	2 (6.5%)	2 (6.5%)
Cleanliness in scheme (37)	26 (70%)	8 (22%)	2 (5%)		1 (3%)
CareLink (35)	16 (46%)	12 (34%)	4 (11%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)

In response to a question on overall satisfaction with the service 81% declared themselves as either satisfied or very satisfied

3.3.0 Empty Property Turnaround Time

Indicator	Past performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future targets	
				10/11	11/12
BV212 average re-let times in days (all properties)	28	25.5	16	24	22
General needs	25	23	15	24	22
Sheltered	38	38	22	24	

3.3.1 Performance for this quarter on empty property turnaround is 16 days. This is an excellent result for the team who have strived to ensure properties are let as soon as possible despite staff shortages.

3.3.2 To improve the re-let time for sheltered properties, some of which have shared facilities, we are setting up open days for applicants so that they can view various schemes prior to making a bid. There has also been an impact from the Sheltered Local Lettings Plan, whereby existing tenants have a priority to move either to a flat on a lower floor, one that is already suitably adapted or to a larger flat i.e. studio to one bedroom. There will be a separate report for HMCC analysing the impact of Local Lettings Plan setting out the benefits to our customers, the benefits to local communities and the impact on re-let times.

3.3.3 For information we are considering taking digital photographic identification during the sign up process to help us to more easily detect any incidents of sub letting or tenancy fraud. A separate report will be coming to this Committee for further discussion and agreement.

3.4.0 Repairs and Improvements – Performance Quarter 1

Repairs and Improvements - Performance 2010/11	Past Performance 08/09	End of Year Performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future Targets
				10/11
Emergency repairs completed in time	96.8 % 98.48 % (Mears) 94.49 % (Kier)	98.4%	98.3%	97%
No. of emergency repairs completed	7,755 4,414 (Mears) 3,341 (Kier)	5,418	1,539	N/A
Urgent repairs completed in time	92.53 % 95.35 % (Mears) 89.18 % (Kier)	97.6%	91.4%	97%
No. of urgent repairs completed	4,391 2,388 (Mears) 2,005 (Kier)	4,336	1,866	N/A
Routine repairs completed within target time	96.01 % 97.86 % (Mears) 93.53 % (Kier)	98.9%	99.9%	97%
No. of routine repairs completed	19,697 11,305 (Mears) 8,419 (Kier)	21,121	3,314	N/A
BV72 Right to Repair orders completed within target time	96.87 %	98.3%	98.46 %	97%
BV73	15 days	12 days	8 days	15 days

Repairs and Improvements - Performance 2010/11	Past Performance 08/09	End of Year Performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future Targets
				10/11
Av. time to complete routine repairs				
RR5 % of appointments kept	98.4%	99.8%	92.96%	95%
NI158 % of council homes that are non-decent	48.89%	39.48%	36.9%	26% (2011/12 - 12%)
BV63 Energy efficiency (SAP rating)	75.9*	75.9	76.3	76.7
LPI G3 Citywide % of stock with up to date gas safety certificates	99.61%	99.68%	99.64%	100%
Mears area	99.49 %	99.74%	99.6%	100%
PH Jones area	99.78 %	99.61%	99.7%	100%

3.5.1 Responsive repairs

The new 10 year partnership with Mears Group has delivered a good level of performance over Quarter 1. Over 1,500 emergency repairs were completed with 98% of these completed within the target of 24 hours.

Performance on urgent repairs was initially below target in the first month of the partnership but following good scrutiny and agreed actions by the partnership the performance has now improved with 97% of urgent repairs completed within 3 days in May and 98% in June. This means that over the whole quarter 91% of urgent repairs were completed within three days. This continued improvement means that overall performance for the year to date is expected to reach the 97% target by the end of Quarter 2.

Over 3,000 routine repairs were carried out in Quarter 1 of 2010/11 and 99.9% of these were completed within the target of 20 working days.

Mears are surveying residents by telephone following the completion of works to their homes. Over Quarter 1, 1,188 residents were contacted and 1,135 or 96% of residents rated the service as satisfactory or very satisfactory.

On average repairs are being completed within eight days of residents contacting the new Mears Repairs Desk. Residents have recently carried out a mystery shopping exercise with the repairs desk and the council and Mears will be working together to further improve the service with this useful feedback.

3.5.2 Decent Homes and SAP (energy efficiency rating)

The first year of our three year investment programme has been agreed with residents and is now underway. The programme includes replacing kitchens, bathrooms, doors and carrying out other works such as rewires. Mears have commenced surveys within the city and decent homes work to improve homes has started. The partnership is looking at improved ways of communicating the programmes and providing more detail of where and when works will be carried out. BHCC has its own tenant liaison team that are working with Mears team to get out on site and discuss the programme with residents.

Programmes for the next year are available on our website at:

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hm-investment-programme>

Over the first quarter the partnership has delivered a 2.6% improvement in decent homes which means that 63.1% or 7,760 of our 12,300 properties meet the standard. Progress in improving homes is a key objective for the partnership and Mears and BHCC are working together to ensure that we achieve our target of having 74% of our homes decent by the end of 2010/11.

3.5.3 Gas servicing

The council, Mears and PH Jones continue to deliver consistently good performance in this area with 99.64% of properties having a current gas safety certificate. There are a total of 34 properties with an overdue safety certificate; all of these have been referred to the council by the constructors and procedures are in place to ensure that all of these properties are accessed and certified. Currently there are no properties with safety checks more than one year overdue. All communal heating systems have a current safety certificate with the exception of two which have been decommissioned.

3.6.0 Estates Service

Indicator	Past performance 08/09	End of year performance 09/10	Quarter 1 10/11	Future targets
				10/11
Completion of cleaning tasks	96%	92%	Not reporting	98.5%
Bulk refuse removal - targets met within timescale	Emergency 77% Routine 84%	Emergency 98.6% Routine 97.3%	Emergency 100% Routine 99%	Emergency 100% Routine 96%
Graffiti removal - Targets met within timescale	Emergency 100% Routine 88%	Emergency 84.3% Routine 75.6%	Emergency 92% Routine 93%	Emergency 100% Routine 96%

- 3.6.1 The cleaning service was restructured last year following consultation with residents with the aim of improving quality of work carried out. The role of Estates Service Business Manager was introduced to the structure to ensure that there is consistency in the work the service carries out; that it meets residents' expectations and also delivers value for money.
- 3.6.2 We no longer count cleaning task completed as a measure of our performance and we will be moving towards a customer satisfaction framework based on:
- Quality checking by managers and residents
 - Feedback from staff, residents and leaseholders
 - Informal complaints, compliments and comments
 - Surveys, telephone, paper based and on-line
 - Estate inspections

We will be using the Housemark Performance Framework and monitoring which has been successful in its pilot stage with the 'Turning the Tide' project.

- 3.6.3 Since April this year we have focused our cleaning service on performance based on resident satisfaction with the quality of our work. We have started consultation with a number of resident groups for our new cleaning standards, which will be displayed in all of the blocks we clean. The feedback from this consultation will shape the information and service that we provide to residents, which will include:
- The standards that can be expected in every block we clean
 - The name of the cleaner and the day we carry out the service
 - The sanctions for non-performance

- 3.6.4 The Neighbourhood Response Team carries out on average 800 jobs per month, including lock changes, communal door repairs, communal light bulb changes, bulk refuse and graffiti removal. These jobs are created from many sources, predominately housing offices, Community Wardens, our estate cleaners and resident groups.

- 3.6.5 Targets for bulk refuse are being achieved with better work planning and improved reporting by staff.

We have failed to meet our targets for graffiti removal but routine removal is improving. The performance in relation to emergency graffiti removal has been affected by the reliability of our specialist vehicle. We are currently exploring the options for replacing the vehicle. In addition training for all staff will be planned this year and a new reporting form for staff which will assist our team in being able to carry our graffiti removal at first visit. Frequently we attend to clean graffiti from already painted surfaces which require additional repainting instead of removal and may result in several trips and attempts to rectify.

- 3.6.6 The amount of bulk refuse continues to increase. Figures for Quarter 1 include the work carried out by the Neighbourhood Response Team in clearing all common ways in line with our fire prevention work.

A more targeted approach to the issue of fly tipping is to be introduced, working with each local housing office on prevention and enforcement measures.

3.6.7 The Neighbourhood Response Team will be keeping detailed information relating to:

- Location
- Type of bulk/fly tipping
- Gross weight and cost to remove

This will allow us to focus on the costs of this service, where we can recharge, take enforcement action and also target ‘hot spot’ areas.

3.7.0 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

3.7.1. Both the city-wide ASB and Tenancy Support teams have been brought together as part of the change in the delivery of housing management services that forms a key aspect of the pilot Social Exclusion Strategy – ‘Turning the Tide’. This was launched in October 2009 and lasts for a period of nine months. More specifically, it is a project targeting anti-social behaviour in Bevendean and Moulsecoomb and is based at the Selsfield Drive Housing Office.

3.7.2 Emphasis is placed on effective outcomes and in order to assess how successful it is, all victims and witnesses will be contacted when a case is closed to determine whether they are satisfied with the way in which the case has been managed.

3.7.3 The intention of the pilot is to ensure that all of the city’s tenants can benefit from the refocused approach to ASB and tenancy sustainment. This includes robust and assertive actions to actively challenge ASB and to ensure that there is consistency city-wide.

3.7.4 As a result of changes brought about through the “Turning the Tide” pilot, the data provided in this report varies from previous reports although the pilot will continue to develop appropriate performance indicators with an emphasis on outcomes.

3.7.5 During Quarter 1 the pilot can report that it has successfully closed five cases, with two cases resulting in eviction. A clear priority of the pilot is to ensure that incidents of anti-social behaviour cease as quickly as possible. Eviction is not an ideal outcome and the pilot aims to use targeted and firm interventions in order to change behaviour whilst maintaining the tenancy wherever possible. The pilot also seeks to ensure sufficient support is provided to victims and witnesses and it is currently in the process of assigning additional staff resources in order to provide an improved support service to residents.

Current high profile ASB cases	Number of new cases	Number of Notices of Seeking Possession served	Number of evictions	Number of closed cases
48	9	6	2	5

3.7.6 The success of the pilot has very much been a result of adopting a multi-agency approach and utilising the various enforcement powers available whilst ensuring that the necessary support is provided for victims, witnesses and perpetrators, who may be presenting with complex needs. The enforcement measures that have been adopted have included a premises closure order in accordance with the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. This ensured a swift cessation in the anti-social behaviour prior to obtaining outright possession of the property through the court.

3.7.7 Other examples of utilising the enforcement options through this approach have included working with the Environmental Health team to obtain a seizure of noise making equipment under the Noise Act 1996. This provided immediate cessation of ongoing noise nuisance. And another case incorporated obtaining an injunction with powers of arrest under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. This, upon breach of the order, resulted in a two month custodial sentence.

3.7.8 Following the closure of the cases from the previous quarter (see below) of all satisfaction questions asked, the percentage of victims of anti-social behaviour either very satisfied or dissatisfied ranged between 60% and 75%, with one response rate of 50%.

Satisfaction	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
How satisfied are you with the way your complaint / case was dealt with?	4	2	2	2	2
How satisfied are you with the outcome of your work with the service?	6	3	1	1	1
How satisfied are you that your case officer was always helpful?	7	1	2	-	2
How satisfied are you that you were kept informed about what was happening throughout your work with the service?	5	3	1	1	2
How satisfied were you with the support given to you by your case officer?	5	3	2	-	2

- 3.7.9 A report specifically focussing on anti-social behaviour and our response to it is due to go to the November HMCC, residents are involved in scrutinising performance in this area through a specific working group (the ASB Focus Group) which first met on 17 May.
- 3.7.10 In addition to the above, suggestions in relation to information on ASB performance etc are welcomed from members of HMCC.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Service specific groups will continue to monitor performance on a regular basis.
- 4.2 The continuing consultation on the new resident involvement strategy will also emphasise continued customer involvement in analysing and scrutinising performance.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Most performance measures discussed in this report have financial implications and these are included in the monthly financial monitoring reports. An example is the improvement in the rent collection and arrears management over the past two years, which has contributed to a saving in the HRA Budget for the bad debt provision requirement. Another example is any improvement in turnaround times or a reduction in empty property numbers increases the amount of rent collected. Improvements in performance will, in general, lead to more resources being available for tenants' services in the future.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen Date: 27 August

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 There are no significant legal or Human Rights Act implications arising from the report's recommendations

Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 27 August

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 These are contained in the body of the report, where appropriate

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report or its publication. Relevant comments are made within the body, where appropriate

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.5 There are no direct risk and opportunity management implications arising directly from this report. Relevant comments are made within the body, where appropriate.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.6 The performance report takes account of corporate priorities, in particular, reducing inequality by increasing opportunity and fair enforcement of the law.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Not applicable to this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 These are contained within the body of the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

