

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

10 December 2012

2012/13 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - HOUSING SERVICES

REPORT OF HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB2287 (HSG) - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2012/13 and Business Plan - 2012/13 To 2042/43 dated 1 February 2012

CAB2235 - 2011/12 Performance Monitoring Outturn - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out the financial monitoring and performance information as well as details on progress against business plan priorities for the first 8 months of 2012/13 for the Council's Housing Services.

Progress against key business plan and performance targets remains on track. The report highlights key issues including areas where performance falls short of target.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet (Housing) Committee notes the performance information and considers whether further actions are required to address any areas of concern.

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DETAIL:

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to review and monitor the performance, on behalf of Cabinet, of the Council's Housing services. The report includes performance information for those services for the period from April 2012 to October 2012.
- 1.2 Performance and monitoring in relation to the HRA Budget is also reported regularly to this Committee. However, the Committee reviewed the budget in detail at its September meeting (CAB2386 (HSG) refers and approved a number of revisions at that meeting. .

2 Performance – HRA Services

- 2.1 All key service priorities are currently progressing in line with the Business Plan. Key progress includes:
 - a) Repairs – Progress against the Repairs Programme is detailed in CAB2417 (HSG) elsewhere on this agenda.
 - b) Voids – Performance has continued to improve during 2012/13. The target average number of days void is 20 days for General Needs housing and 25 days for Sheltered Housing. The current figure is 19.47 Days for general needs, 19.83 days for sheltered housing and 20.62 days average overall. This is due to continual reviewing of the void process to eliminate delay where possible.
 - c) Arrears – The amounts of outstanding arrears as a percentage of rent due was 1.09% last year. This is currently at 1.15% and it is expected that arrears will not decrease to previous levels. Collecting arrears is becoming more difficult and this is expected to get worse next year. The number of tenants using the Citizens Advice Bureau Money Advice Service has remained at capacity over the year, with on average a waiting list of 4 tenants. The impact of Welfare Reform starting in April 2012 has yet to be determined, but a project team has been formed to try to raise awareness and minimise the impact.
 - d) Anti-Social Behaviour – From April 2012 to date 8 cases have been referred to the Winchester Assessment and Mediation

Service. 13 Notices of Seeking Possession have been served resulting in 2 Suspended Possession Orders (one for drugs and one for noise nuisance), 1 Possession Order (for both drugs and noise nuisance) and 2 evictions (one for drugs and one for both drugs and noise nuisance).

- e) Estate Improvements Programme – Progress against this programme is set out in CAB2426 (HSG) elsewhere on this agenda.
- f) Sheltered Housing – Works to upgrade vacant accommodation at Whitewings and to decommission Victoria House Extra Care scheme are progressing well and both projects remain on target for completion by the end of the 2012.

2.2 The main areas where work has not progressed in accordance with business plan include:

- a) Gas Servicing – whilst performance remains high throughout the year 3 properties have reduced the annual figure to 99.85%. 1 case has received an injunction at court. The other 2 cases relate to tenants suffering from a range of health issues and the area housing managers are working with other agencies to help to gain access. Overall performance is good and both Housing officers, legal officers and contractors are working well in partnership to maintain performance.
- b) Former Tenant Arrears – Former tenant arrears (FTA) has increased by £18,000 since March 2012 and is now £30,000 over target. As reported previously, the target is ambitious and the level of debt is low compared to many social landlords. Whilst officers have maintained performance in collecting current tenant arrears, staff changes and vacancies have prevented progress with FTAs. This type of debt is notoriously difficult to collect. External debt agencies are used for some cases, although an estimated 70 to 80% will need to be written off as unrecoverable/uneconomic to pursue.

3 Performance - Housing General Fund Services

3.1 Performance is also being maintained in some key measures in the Housing General Fund services:

- a) There has been no use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for homeless people since March 2012 (numbers reached 26 at one stage in 2011/12).
- b) The Council has increased its stock of temporary accommodation through the inclusion of Barnes House, 27 Eastgate Street and use of a number of units of general needs housing. The number of households currently being supported in temporary accommodation is 49.

- c) There is a substantial demand for homelessness and housing advice services with 609 applicants presenting for help since 1st April 2012. Of these, 73 cases were resolved at first point of contact, 30 were accepted as homeless and placed in temporary accommodation and 95 cases resulted in homelessness being successfully prevented. Work is ongoing with the remainder. Demand for options in the private rented sector has resulted in 55 deposit loans being approved so far this year with a gross value of £104,000. Officers are making greater efforts to recover loaned amounts to ensure sustainability of the scheme.
- d) Two pilot projects are currently underway, developing a personalised budget service for entrenched rough sleepers with the Trinity Centre, and working with CRISIS to improve access to private-rented accommodation for homeless people. The recent Rough Sleeper count coordinated by the Council and conducted in partnership with a number of agencies noted 7 rough sleepers in the City on the day of the count.
- e) Appendix 3 includes information in relation to Housing Need and indicates average wait times for applicants for housing. It also illustrates numbers on the housing waiting list. There were 2097 applicants with a band 3 priority or higher as at September 2012, with a further 1300 with a band 4 or 5 priority (i.e. low or no housing need). Proposals for reviewing the current scheme of allocations will be brought to this Committee in the New Year.

4 Benchmarking and Value for Money

- 4.1 Each year, the City Council take part in an independently assessed Value for Money/Benchmarking exercise coordinated by Housemark, an organisation jointly funded by the National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing. Reports are prepared comparing Winchester's costs and performance with other social landlords (councils and registered providers) in the South East and with stock holding councils nationally. The 2011/12 report has recently been published and Winchester remains above average of landlords for most of its performance in 2011/12, as well as below average for its unit costs across most services.
- 4.2 The full results can be viewed on the Council's website at: <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/Housing/CouncilHousing/HousingPerformance/>. A performance "dashboard" allowing easy review of the results is also available in the same section of the website. A more details summary of results will be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.

5 TACT Comment

- 5.1 TACT notes current performance and can confirm that Tenant Scrutiny groups are keeping a good watch on this. TACT will continue to support the Council to make sure that services continue to meet tenant expectation.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

9. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CHANGE PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 9.1 The Community Strategy places emphasis on strong performance management. This report forms part of the quarterly performance and financial monitoring processes, designed to check progress being made against agreed targets.

10 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 10.1 There are no direct resource implications the need to be considered as part of this report, although obviously ensuring strong performance in areas such as voids and arrears is essential to the financial health of the HRA.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 11.1 Risk management plans form an integral part of the HRA Business Plan and key risks have been assessed and actions are in place to mitigate those risks.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None












APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Landlord Services Performance Indicators

Appendix 2: Voids Scorecard

Appendix 3: Choice Based Lettings Scorecard

Landlord Performance Indicators Q2 2012/13**CAB2425 (HSG)
APPENDIX 1**

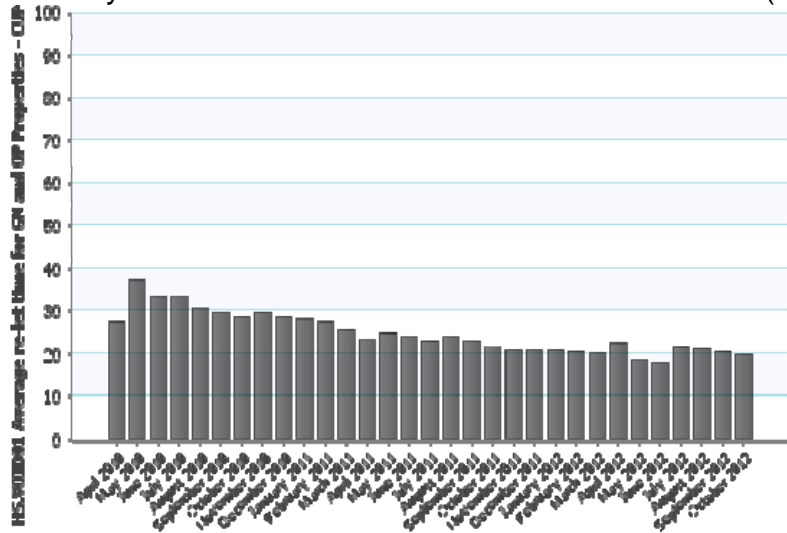
Short Name	2010/11	2011/12	2012/2013			Notes
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status	
% non-decent council homes	0%	0%	n/a	0%		Next full House Conditions survey due 2013 will provide an accurate figure for this
Local authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services	85.4%	85.4%	85.4%	85%		Last monitored Nov 2010. Next survey due in February 2013
Current tenant rent arrears as a % of rent due	1.09%	1.10%	1.15%	1%		
Gas servicing - The % of homes with current gas servicing certificate	98.9%	99.9%	99.85%	100%		This is 3 cases. 1 of which we have obtained an injunction from court
% Stock empty at the end of the year	1.09%	1.1%	1.24%	1%		
Rent & charges lost through vacant dwellings (%)	1.12%	0.9%	0.62%	2%		The monetary value of this is currently £156k
Total number of tenancies/ licensees owing over 13 weeks rent	35	41	36			
Value of former tenant arrears	£179k	£180K	£198k	£160k		
Average re-let time for General Needs and Older Persons properties (in days)	25.63	19	19.63	22		
Average re-let time for General Needs properties (in days)	21.75	17.66	19.47	20		
Average re-let time for Older Persons properties (in days)	27.5	21	19.83	25		
Average re-let time for Hostels (in days)	32.1	23.89	16.46	20		

Landlord Performance Indicators Q2 2012/13CAB2425 (HSG)
APPENDIX 1**Landlord Services - General Quantitative Indicators/Service Volumes**

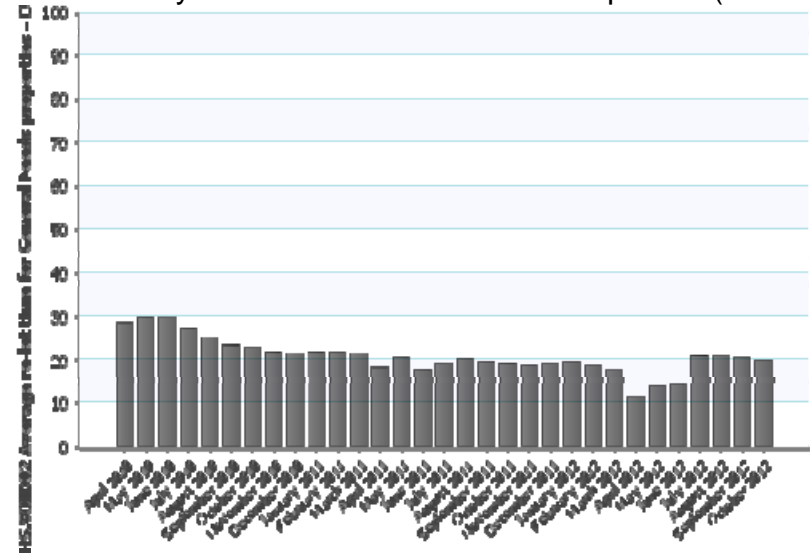
Description	2010/11 Value	2011/12 Value	2012/13 Apr - Oct
New tenancies - Waiting list	216	256	130
New tenancies – Transfers	72	136	45
New tenancies - Mutual Exchanges	79	94	55
No. of Introductory Tenancies commencements	196	236	127
Number of Evictions (rents)	5	6	1
Number of Evictions (nuisance)	2	3	2
Number of Evictions (Introductory Tenancy)		1	1
Number of Notices Seeking Possession (rents)	677	645	333
Number of Notices Seeking Possession (nuisance)	10	8	10

Re-let times/rent lost for Vacant Properties

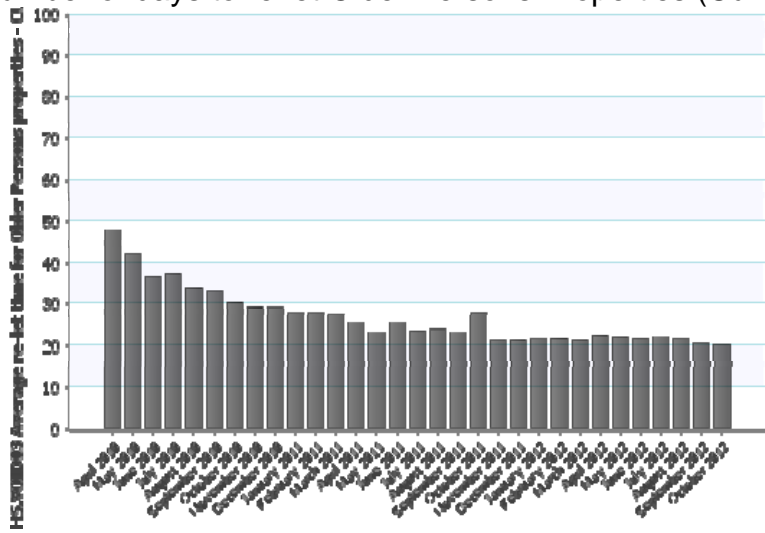
No. of days to re-let General Needs and Older Persons (Cumulative)



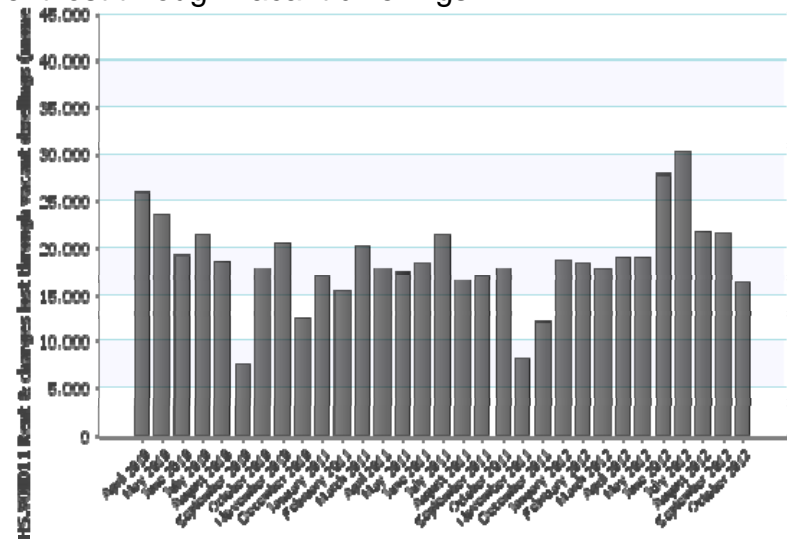
Number of days to re-let General Needs Properties (Cumulative)



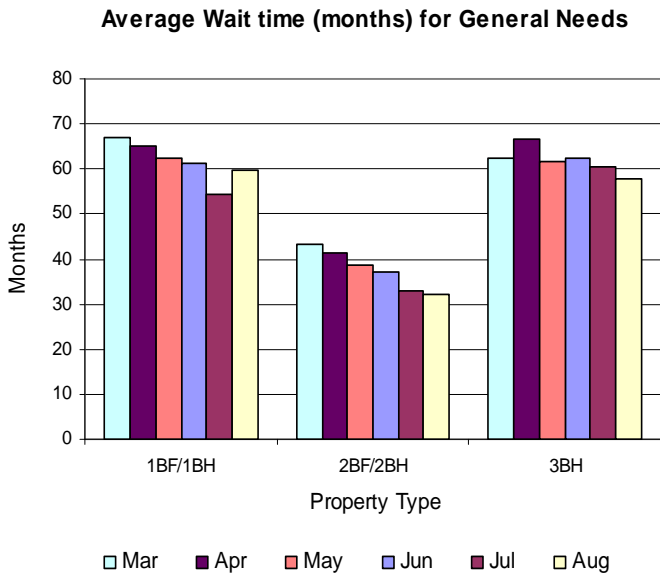
Number of days to re-let Older Persons Properties (Cumulative)



Rent lost through vacant dwellings



AC010 Affordable Housing: Average wait time (months) for General Needs (Band 3) Applicants



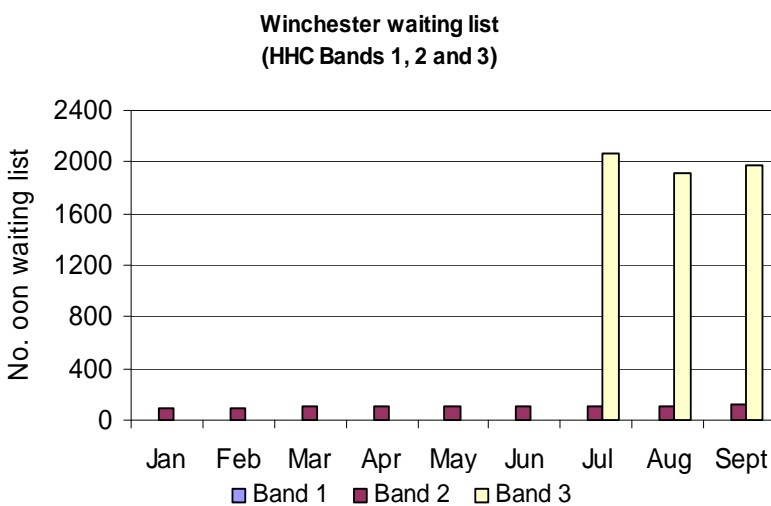
Data			
	1 Bed Flat/ 1 Bed House	2 Bed Flat/ 2 Bed House	3 Bed House
February	67.67	44.25	66.42
March	66.83	43.42	62.58
April	65.25	41.17	66.42
May	62.25	38.83	61.58
June	61.08	37.00	62.42
July	54.42	33.00	60.33
August	59.59	32.00	57.57
Sept	n/a	n/a	n/a

Data is based on a rolling 12 month average for each property type.

Latest Comments:

Whilst specific data for September is not available, the average wait time for 1 and 3 bed properties is around 5 years. The greater number of 2 bed properties means these take an average of 3 years to relet. The slight improvement in the above figures relates to more properties tending to become available in the summer months. Any real long term improvement would require a significant increase in the number of homes for social rent being developed. The waiting list for properties stands at 3,390 households (2097 in bands 1 to 3), an increase of 117 since last month. However, only 59 properties were let in September. There are still very few social properties available to let to applicants on the list and this has a direct effect on waiting times for properties.

AC011 Total numbers on Housing Waiting List (Bands 1, 2 and 3 – WCC area only)



Data			
	Band 1 No.	Band 2 No.	Band 3 No.
March	0	101	n/a
April	0	103	n/a
May	0	110	n/a
June	0	101	n/a
July	0	110	2,064
August	0	104	1,910
September	0	115	1,982

The data and chart relate to the numbers on the Winchester waiting list that are in Bands 1, 2 and 3 only.

Latest Comments:

Band 1 - "Urgent Priority" is awarded where, customers have life-threatening health conditions directly linked to unsuitable housing conditions or customers need accessible or sheltered housing so that they can be discharged from hospital. Usually there is very few customers awarded Band 1 even though customers assessed as having Band 2 - "High Priority" can be moved to Band 1 if there are both urgent and exceptional circumstances. About half of those in Band 2 are existing social housing tenants who are giving up larger property which no longer meets their needs. Band 3 figures were added to this indicator in July to illustrate where the majority of households in housing need are banded. A further 1,300 households have a band 4 or 5 priority (i.e. low or no housing need).