

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

25 March 2015

2014/15 PERFORMANCE MONITORING Q3 UPDATE - HOUSING SERVICES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER)

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Recent References

CAB2637(HSG) - 2014/15 Performance Monitoring Q2 Update - Housing Services dated 26 November 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out the third quarter performance information for 2014/15 against key performance indicators and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

In general, performance remains on target and in some key areas, such as voids, is well ahead of target.

The report sets out the positive progress with the New Homes programme and also seeks to reassure the Committee that work on addressing arrears and helping tenants affected by welfare reform is achieving positive results.

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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REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER)

DETAIL:

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to review and monitor the performance, on behalf of Cabinet, in those areas which are the responsibility of the Portfolio Holder for Housing. Full Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan progress and performance data has been included in this report for completeness and to ensure Members and TACT have the opportunity to review and monitor all areas of the Council's Housing function.

2 Progress against HRA Business Plan targets and objectives

- 2.1 The main successes of the year so far have included the following:

a) Arrears and the impact of Welfare Reform

The level of arrears remains below our maximum acceptable level. Arrears for tenants affected by the "size criteria" continue to be less than originally expected, which reflects the success of measures put in place to address this challenge. Former tenant arrears remain higher than the acceptable level, as they have for some years. Changes to the Housing Management team to take effect from April 2015 will specifically address this issue by increasing the resource available to review and reduce former tenant debt.

b) Sheltered Housing

The project to commission a replacement alarm monitoring service is progressing well and Chichester Careline (wholly owned by Chichester District Council) has been appointed to monitor alarms with effect from April 2015. The new Sheltered Housing Management team has now been recruited and again will assume duties with effect from April 2015. All the changes (relating to scheme management, scheme classification and charges) have been communicated to sheltered residents through scheme meetings and in writing.

c) Voids

Performance has continued to remain very positive. The average number of days void overall this year is 14.2 days which is the best performance on record.

d) Wise Move

The scheme has proved very popular and the help and assistance offered to tenants with moving has seen over 70 moves completed this year, 50 of which were previously affected by the "Social Sector Size Criteria" rules.

e) Tenant Involvement

The tenant scrutiny process continues to work well with a number of groups undertaking performance reviews of key areas including Repairs, Sheltered Housing and Housing Management. The tenant scrutiny of grounds maintenance continues and tenants have met with both officers and contractors, including site visits across the district. Tenant training and also a programme of health walks and other physical activities on estates has worked well.

f) Self Service Portal

The portal is now live and all tenants are being encouraged to register. The portal allows tenants to access their rent account, report repairs and also to report changes do personal details the Council holds.

g) Extra Care

Work to convert Danemark Court, Winchester to a full Extra Care scheme and Matilda Place to a specialist Dementia Care scheme has been completed. This has included major improvements to communal areas at Matilda Place as well as the creation of an additional flat.

h) New Homes

- (i) Victoria House – Tenders have been received which are above project estimates. These are currently being assessed to determine the best way forward for the scheme. Demolition works are underway.
- (ii) Westman Rd – Planning permission granted, Local Growth Funding approved to bring forward the scheme during 2015/16.
- (iii) New Queens Head – work has now started on site and new homes are expected to be occupied by April 2016.

- (iv) Extra Care – Planning permission has now been secured for the Chesil scheme. The project will be tendered shortly and it is planned to bring a full report to Cabinet in July 2015. The Department of Health has confirmed that 6 shared ownership flats are a requirement of the grant funding.
- (v) Springvale, Swanmore – Planning permission has been secured and the scheme is currently out to tender.
- (vi) Other projects – a consultation event is planned for Mitford Road, New Alresford and customer feedback from the consultation event regarding Top Field, Kingsworthy is currently being reviewed.

2.2 Main areas where work has not progressed in accordance with business plan:

a) Programme Slippage

Programmes in relation to loft conversions, estate improvements and sheltered conversions have all been subject to slippage due to limited staff resources. All programmes are now progressing well against revised timetables and additional resources have been secured to address this issue going forward.

b) Asset Management

Plans to bring forward a detailed Asset Management and Energy Strategy in 2014/15 have not been achieved. A Member Briefing event is planned for June with a view to completing the Strategy for consideration by this Committee in September.

c) IT links with contractors

Plans to develop effective interfaces between the Council's Orchard housing system have not progressed as planned due to limited resources with both Council and contractor teams. It is now projected that this work will be completed by July 2015..

d) Gas Safety

Whilst over 99% of relevant properties have an up to date gas safety certificate, there is a risk that not all properties will be compliant at the end of March. Notices have been served on tenants who have not provided access to contractors. Officers have met with the contractor to agree how best to resolve the matter and additional resources from both teams are now working on gaining access where necessary.

3 Benchmarking and Value for Money

- 3.1 Performance against key indicators is detailed in Appendix 2. Performance in relation to Decent Homes, Tenant Satisfaction and Arrears remain in line with the top 25% of landlords nationally.
- 3.2 The Council has completed very detailed benchmarking comparisons with other local authority landlords. 2013/14 results can be viewed on the Council's website at:
<http://www.winchester.gov.uk/Housing/CouncilHousing/HousingPerformance/>
- 3.3 Winchester remains either in the top 25% or above average of landlords for most areas of its performance in 2013/14. The set of results against 2014/15 performance will be published to tenants in the Annual Report in October 2015.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

4 COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 4.1 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.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 There are no direct resource implications that 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.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 6.1 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.

7 TACT Comment

- 7.1 Due to the timing of the report and the TACT meeting, which was held after dispatch of the committee papers, it was not possible to obtain a response from TACT in time for inclusion in the report.
- 7.2 The paper will be discussed with TACT at its March meeting and TACT representatives will respond verbally at the Committee meeting.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:






Appendix 1: Progress against Key HRA Business Plan Objectives.

Appendix 2: Landlord Services Key Performance Indicators

Appendix 3: Welfare Reform Scorecard








Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2014-2015

CAB2677(HSG) APPENDIX 1

Action Description	Action Desired Outcome	Status	Dates Due Date	Notes & History Latest Note
Value for Money	Submit all relevant financial and performance returns to "Housemark" as part of their annual benchmarking analysis. Prepare and distribute Annual Report to all tenants. Review relevant unit cost and performance data and agree actions to address variances.		31-Dec-2014	Core returns submitted and Housemark reports now received. Outcomes/performance included in CAB2637(HSG) dated 26 November.
To complete a fundamental review of all Housing Services in line with the Council's Transformation agenda	To provide Tenants with the most efficient cost effective service		31-Mar-2015	Review of all HRA areas complete. General fund Housing services will be completed in 2015/16
To replace existing Document Management system as part of the Council's Transformation agenda	A new document management system in place		31-Mar-2015	System now live. Staff training planned for April 2015.
To establish "self service portal" to Orchard Housing system	Giving tenants a flexible way of managing their account, repairs and personal details		31-Dec-2014	System now live. Publicity underway to encourage use by tenants.
Increasing Affordable Housing Numbers	<p>To attain "approved developer status" with the Home and Communities Agency.</p> <p>Deliver the approved New Homes Programme and ensure priority schemes remain on track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Queens Head, Stanmore – To commence works to build an estimated 20 houses, subject to Planning. • Victoria House, Winchester – To commence works to build 27 flats, subject to Planning. • Extra Care – Commission and develop an additional extra care provision in central Winchester (subject to feasibility) <p>In addition, to ensure a suitable "pipeline" of future schemes is established, based on availability of resources.</p> <p>To exploit opportunities to secure additional funding to support Council New Build projects.</p>		31-Mar-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development status approved. • New Queens Head granted planning consent November 2014, started on site February 2015. • Victoria House Tenders returned. Extra Care granted planning consent February 2015, start on site expected late August 2015. • Small sites programme progressing 5 schemes






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Deliver an enhanced maintenance programme for Council housing stock	10 year programme to ensure all kitchens are less than 20 years and bathrooms less than 30 years by 2023. 10 year programme to ensure all heating systems are less than 15 years old by 2023.		31-Mar-2015	Programme progressing well and on target. New asset plan for post 2015 approved by Cabinet (Hsg) Ctte
Making Best Use of Existing Housing Stock	Approving a long term asset management strategy which takes full account of stock survey results. Revised Business Plan investment projects to reflect Stock Survey Results. Investing £200k per annum in loft conversions to address tenant overcrowding.		31-Mar-2015	Outturn from Stock Survey and repair investment/DH plans approved at October Cabinet. Business Plan (incorporating investment needs and associated staffing costs) approved by Council in February.
Improving the energy efficiency of the Housing stock	Exploiting Government funding to renewable heating initiatives and other schemes promoting energy efficiency.		31-Mar-2015	£1.5m programme of heating upgrades completed. Proposals for external wall insulation at Winnall hit by grant funding changes.
Review options for future of Sheltered Housing service.	Review options for future of Sheltered Housing Services.		31-Mar-2015	New service determined and team recruited. Monitoring service commissioned. Consultations undertaken at all schemes.
Developing Extra Care Provision	Continue transition of Danemark Court from Category 2 to full 2.5 Extra Care Scheme. Work with HCC to provide specialist dementia care service at Matilda Place.		31-Mar-2015	All works complete and both schemes fully functional as Extra Care facilities
Programme of adaptation and decoration to be drawn up for all Sheltered Housing schemes	Improving Quality and provision to Sheltered Housing Tenants		31-Mar-2015	Improvement works and budget spend being closely monitored. Provision of electric scooter stores is progressing too slowly, and will need to be accelerated to deliver success within this financial year. Provision at Richard Moss House requires planning permission.
Mitigate impact of welfare reform on Council tenants	Joint Housing/Benefits programme. Continue to develop the advice and support services aimed at all those affected by Welfare Reform. Provide increased payment options/frequencies for tenants. Implement a range of measures to prepare for "Direct Payment"		31-Mar-2018	Welfare Reform working group met in February to discuss launch of Universal Credit in September 2015

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2014-2015

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Action Description	Action Desired Outcome	Status	Dates Due Date	Notes & History Latest Note
	of Universal Credit and its potential impact on rent arrears.			
Wider promotion of "Wise Move" Incentive scheme, targeting older residents as well as those affected by "Size Criteria" reform.	Making best use of our housing stock		31-Mar-2015	Over 70 moves completed to date. Details of over 60s being prepared for Wise Move Officer to contact
Promoting Resident Involvement	Adapt Tenant Scrutiny process in light of external review completed in 2013/14. Develop a new TACT constitution/Tenant involvement compact aimed at increasing the effectiveness of TACT and other groups and extending involvement opportunities for tenants		31-Mar-2015	New constitution sent to all TACT members for consultation, will be completed by the end of March
Tenant training programme and Active Lifestyles programme targeted at specific areas of Deprivation on estates	Tenant training programme and Active Lifestyles programme targeted at specific areas of deprivation on housing estates.		31-Mar-2015	Training programme delivered and programme of sports/health activities on estates also delivered by Sports team.
Improving standards of Grounds Maintenance and Communal Cleaning	Implement an enhanced cleaning regime to communal housing schemes and develop effective monitoring systems to review performance of new cleaning contract. Increase frequency of maintenance visits to communal housing land.		31-Jul-2015	New service has been determined and appointments made to allow an April 2015 commencement.
Improving the Quality of Housing Estates and Neighbourhoods	Estate improvement programme. Implement new caretaking services to Trussell Crescent, Week and Woolford Close, Stanmore.		31-Mar-2015	As above



Completed



Assigned; In Progress

















Check Progress



Overdue

Landlord Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Q3 Update**CAB2677 (HSG)
APPENDIX 2**

Short Name	2012/13	2012/13	2014/2015 Q3			Notes
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status	
% non-decent council homes	n/a	0%	0%	15.5%		801 Properties have been reported as Non-decent from the Stock Survey
Tenants' satisfaction with landlord services	86.42%	86.42%	86.42%	85%		Last survey was done Feb 2013. Next Survey due April 2015
Current tenant rent arrears as a % of rent due	1.2%	0.88%	1.18%	1.5%		
% of responsive repairs jobs completed within target	90.6%	86%	90%	90%		
Average number of days to complete responsive repairs	10	8.48	6.73	8		
Overall level of satisfaction for repairs jobs	new	97.95%	98.43%	95%		14366 jobs
Repairs jobs completed within 1 visit	new	81%	83%	80%		95% within 2 visits
Gas servicing - The % of homes with current gas servicing certificate	99.99%	99.99%	99.4%	100%		Contractor performance under review. Notices served on houses where entry has not been achieved
% Stock empty at the end of the period	1.01%	0.93%	0.7%	1%		
Rent & charges lost through vacant dwellings (%)	0.62%	0.5%	0.53%	0.85%		The monetary value of this £118k
Total number of tenancies/ licensees owing over 13 weeks rent	37	35	39			
Value of former tenant arrears	£198k	£202k	£223k	£160k		Addressed by establishing new Income team with additional resources for FTAs.
Average re-let time for General Needs and Older Persons properties (in days)	20	20.2	14.21	19		
Average re-let time for General Needs properties (in days)	18.45	19.06	14.01	18.5		
Average re-let time for Older Persons properties (in days)	21.08	21.57	14.57	20		

Housing Arrears/Welfare Reform Performance Scorecard – As at 12 January 2015

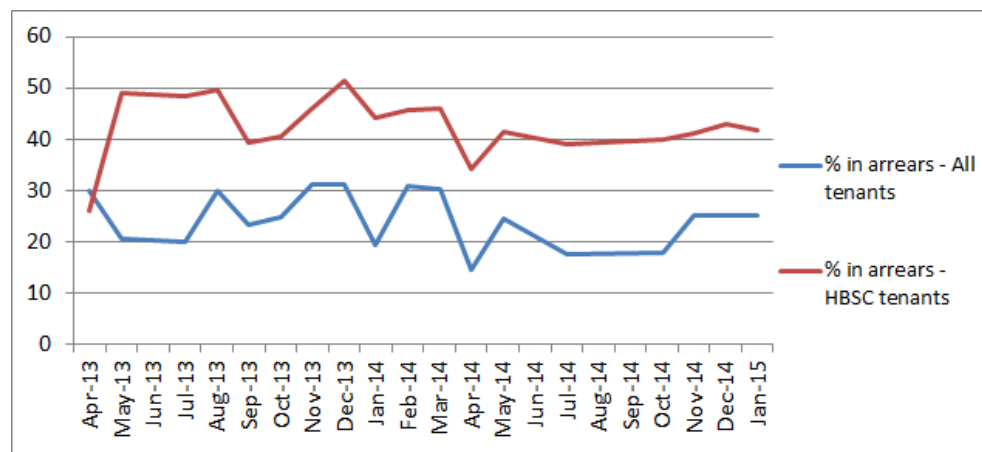
All Tenants

Level of Arrears	Tenancies	%
Not In Arrears	3711	74.82
Less than £500	1077	21.71
Between £501 - £1000	96	1.94
Between £1001 - £2000	61	1.23
Over £2001	15	0.30
TOTAL	4,960	100

Tenants affected by Social Sector Size Criteria

Level of Arrears	Tenancies	%
Not In Arrears	154	58.33
Less than £500	90	34.09
Between £501 - £1000	12	4.55
Between £1001 - £2000	6	2.27
Over £2001	2	0.76
TOTAL	264	100.00

Comparing the Arrears levels



The charts show that:

- Of the Tenants affected 41.67% are in arrears compared to 25.18% of All Tenants
- The value of arrears for affected tenants is £42,128
- Of the Tenants affected, 99 (37%) have made a claim for Discretionary Housing Payment DHP and of these 67 have been successful (67%).

Tenants affected are being served with Notices of Seeking Possession where appropriate. All requests to serve an NSP must be approved by a manager.

89 NSPs have been served to 78 tenancies since the introduction of the SSSC.

Benefit Cap

- 4 Council tenants are currently affected by the Cap.

Wise-Move – downsizing initiative

- 61 tenants were in consultation about downsizing through this initiative
- 128 tenants had successfully downsized and benefited from the incentive, 50 of which were previously affected by the SSSC.
- 4 tenants were in the moving phase in that they had been offered a property or had a mutual exchange approved.

