

HOUSING AND ANTI-POVERTY SCRUTINY PANEL		DATE: 8 February 2017
TITLE: Quarter 2 Performance Reporting – Housing		ITEM NO: 6
CHIEF OFFICER Senior Assistant Director of Community Services	CABINET MEMBER Housing and Anti-Poverty	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides information on the performance indicators for Housing and presents data relating to the second quarter of 2016/17. Responsibility for these indicators is split between the Directorate of Community Services and the Directorate of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills (DRES).

2. Background

- 2.1 Performance indicators are developed with the intention of providing an accurate picture of housing services in Royal Greenwich. Performance information aims to:

- give an insight in to customer satisfaction;
- indicate the responsiveness and quality of the services;
- monitor finances and budget;
- Highlight external factors that influence housing within Royal Greenwich.

- 2.2 All performance indicators are logged on Covalent, the Council's performance management reporting system, and are circulated monthly to the Community Services Directorate Departmental Management Team and team managers.

- 2.3 This report aims to provide an overview of key performance indicators (Appendix A includes the full data set of 25 PIs). Where performance targets have not been met; some context and narrative is provided with a view to explaining and resolving areas of underperformance. This is set out below:

3. Customer Care and Communications

- 3.1 Minimise the effects of welfare reform

- 3.1.1 The number of tenants moving via mutual exchanges

There is an annual target of 100 and at the end of this Quarter, a total of 46 mutual exchanges had taken place; just below the expected figure at this stage of 50.

Households are no longer allowed to exchange to a property with an extra bedroom, unless they are not affected by the under-occupation charge. This has had a detrimental effect with regard to the number of mutual exchanges that the Housing Service can consider. The Allocations Service is sending information to all priority applicants on the Housing Register promoting the option of mutual exchange. In addition, the Housing Visitors provide individual advice and information on the scheme.

3.1.2 The number of properties let to tenants under-occupying

The Housing Service had let 59 properties to households who were under-occupying which is below the expected level of 75, in order to meet the annual target of 150. The key factor underlying this trend is the reduced number of Council and Registered Providers' properties which have become available for letting. Asset Management is implementing a high level Voids Improvement Programme to improve the turnaround time for empty properties. The success of the programme will increase the capacity of the Allocations Service to rehouse priority applicants including those who are under-occupying.

3.2 Preventing homelessness

3.2.1 Number of households living in temporary accommodation, Homelessness Acceptances & Prevention Casework

Homelessness is increasing nationally and London boroughs are experiencing the most significant rises. The number of homeless households to whom London boroughs have accepted a duty rose by 118% between 2010/11 and 2015/16 and levels of homelessness are continuing to rise. The driving factors behind this increase are the lack of access to the private sector because of high rents; high rates of eviction from the private sector, such that is the number one cause of homelessness; welfare reforms.

Greenwich's Housing Options & Support Service (HOSS) has an excellent record of accomplishment in preventing and tackling homelessness. In recognition of this success, in September 2015, the National Practitioner Support Service awarded Greenwich's HOSS the Government's "Gold

Standard”; the first local authority to achieve this standard. This success has continued this year; HOSS in partnership with other agencies has prevented homelessness in 879 cases, through the provision of casework advice and support. The service is therefore on track to significantly exceed the annual target of 1,300. It is therefore proposed that HOSS should increase its the annual target to 1,500, in recognition of the priority of this work.

Greenwich’s success in preventing homelessness means that the number of households accepted as statutorily homeless and those that are placed in temporary accommodation is significantly less than for most other London boroughs, including all the other boroughs in the southeast sub-region. Many boroughs have significantly more households in temporary accommodation: as examples, Newham 4,233, Haringey 3,214 and Brent 2,878,

South East London Boroughs: Households in Temporary Accommodation, (Q2), September 2016,

Borough	TA 30 Jun 16	TA 30 Sep 16	Increase/Decrease
Bexley	820	867	47
Bromley	1307	1359	52
Greenwich	474	523	49
Lewisham	1787	1768	-19
Southwark	1476	1601	125

Despite the Royal Borough’s continued success in preventing homelessness, it is experiencing an unprecedented demand, which means that the number of households to whom the Royal Borough has to accept a statutory duty is rising sharply. In parallel, the Royal Borough has had to place a massively increased number of homeless households in temporary accommodation.

Community Services had set targets for 2016/17, that its aim was to accept a maximum of 450 households as statutorily homeless and place a maximum of 450 households in temporary accommodation. At the end of Quarter 2, 523 households were residing in temporary accommodation and the Royal Borough had accepted a statutory homelessness duty for 259 households. In this context, given the scale of the homelessness demand, Community Services is proposing to revise the targets for these two indicators. Community Services will aim to:

- accept a maximum of 550 households as statutorily homeless
- have a maximum of 550 households placed in temporary accommodation

3.2.2 Number of private sector properties procured for homeless households – Preventing Homelessness

We aim to procure 200 affordable private sector properties a year in order to provide alternative accommodation for households who are at risk of homelessness. However, the escalating rent levels in the private sector market mean that it has been very difficult to procure affordable properties. Community Services had procured 37 properties at the end of Quarter 2 so it is significantly below the level required to meet the target of 200.

However, the procurement and availability of private sector properties is not an activity which the Royal Borough can control. In addition, it is one of a range of measures, which contributes to, and is included in the prevention of homelessness performance indicator. Therefore, Community Services is proposing to delete this indicator and present information on private sector procurement, within the data on homelessness prevention for future reports.

3.2.3 The Acquisition Programme

A key priority for Community Services is to improve the quality and affordability of temporary accommodation, reducing the Royal Borough's reliance on high cost, private sector placements, a significant proportion of which are out of the borough. To that end, Community Services in partnership with DRES, is carrying out a property Acquisitions Programme.

The Royal Borough's Acquisitions Programme to the value of £17.8M will be funded from a mix of Right to Buy (RTB) receipts (30%) and General Fund borrowing (70%). It will assist in reducing the budget

pressures, whilst increasing the supply of good quality temporary accommodation located in the borough.

3.3 Improve Communications with customers

3.3.1 Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints responded to in 15 working days

89 out of 109 complaints were responded to within 15 working days. Performance levels are mainly attributed to the Asset Management & Repairs Services being in a state of transition following recent organisational changes.

It is apparent that the service faces challenges around response times to customer complaints or enquiries which in turn have led to a significant number falling outside target.

Efforts to deal with the backlog have been successful and the service is now fully back in line with Service Standards. Processes are in place to ensure resources are better aligned towards the tasks and to ensure the service is not back in this position

However, with complaints more generally, it was reported to the Housing and Anti-Poverty Scrutiny Panel in December 2016 that customer satisfaction response rates have been sustained with a significant reduction in the number of complaints received. Some of the factors that have contributed to this improvement include:

- Changing how we make appointments with customers - allowing the customer greater choice about when we will call at their home. (We would also expect this change to reduce the number of occasions when we call to carry out a repair but find no-one at home but we are not yet able to report whether this is the case).
- Text alerts are sent to residents' mobile phones to remind them of their repair appointment.
- Revising the scripts used in the Contact Centre to improve the accuracy of repair ordering, thereby reducing those occasions when a resident will wait in only for the wrong operative to arrive to carry out the wrong task.
- Operatives have direct contact with their supervisors whilst in the customer's home, which allows for additional or varied work to be agreed and carried out without the need for a further visit to inspect and agree.

The above changes have, in turn, helped us to improve the proportion of repairs that are carried out “Right First Time” - itself a great driver for customer satisfaction.

3.3.2 Percentage of Full – Ombudsman enquiries responded to in 15 working days

Performance improved this quarter to 83.33% of Ombudsman complaints responded to in time. Five out of six were replied to in time.

Unfortunately, Ombudsman complaints are often very complex and targets can be difficult to meet due to Ombudsman not working to fixed deadlines, however, as stated above a review of resources is in place with a view to ensuring that responsiveness targets are met

4. Improving the Standard of homes

4.1 Improving Repairs Quality and Response Rates

4.1.1 Voids Turnaround Time – Key to Key

The key to key time has been reducing month by month due to the introduction of new procedures (initial clearance and asbestos checks) within the voids team and allocation times (voids team now book viewing times).

The average turnaround for last Quarter was 62 days; this has improved to 56 days this Quarter.

There is also a service review to look at voids methodology and ways in which service delivery and turnaround time can be improved. The Voids Project Group has examined the end to end process and identified opportunities for short-term and long-term improvement. A full report will be produced in February 2017 that will contain a series of recommendations that will aim to improve void turnaround time within the Royal Borough.

4.1.2 Percentage of non-urgent repairs completed in target time – overall

85.75% of repairs were completed on time against a target of 96% (6198 repairs out of 7,228 repairs).

Following the previous Quarter’s report, in which Asset Management identified a shortage of specialist trade operatives, they have now recruited additional specialist staff in order to improve performance. The average

waiting time for a non-urgent repair has improved from 12.27 days in 2015/16 to an average of 10.79 days this year. However, Asset Management is putting in place further improvements in order to achieve continuing reductions in the proportion of responsive (non-urgent) repairs that are not carried out within the agreed timescale.

4.1.3 Percentage of urgent repairs completed in target time – overall

The performance for Quarter 2 is 70.35% (4,703 repairs out of 6,837) against a target of 98% target.

The Asset Management and Repairs Service cannot attain the desired target, due to 'out of time appointments' being made which fall beyond performance timescale. This former Best Value Performance Indicator (BV72) measures performance in completing a set list of urgent repairs within government-specified time limits. However, to improve customer service the Royal Borough allows its tenants to request appointments to suit their availability to be at home. As a consequence, appointments are made which are outside the performance timescale. This means that Asset Management is completing a proportion of repairs after the target date, at the tenant's request. The Asset Management and Repairs Service is working with colleagues in Housing IT to determine whether they can automatically exclude these repairs from the performance monitoring (but only for those repair orders where the 'late' completion is at the tenant's request).

5 Increase Investment and Value for Money

5.1 Maximise the collection of rent and service charges

5.1.1 Percentage of Former Tenants' Arrears (FTA) collected against current FTA balance

Performance has improved on this indicator with the percentage increasing from 4.48% to 8.06%.

Home-loss payments have reduced in-year and FTA write offs will be expedited within 2016/17 following procedural issues and delays being resolved around sign-off.

A broader rationalisation of FTA structures, roles and responsibilities, in addition to a review of the overall impact and effectiveness of the FTA team is anticipated to commence in 2017/18.

6 Regeneration & Delivering New Homes

6.1 Delivery of new homes

6.1.1 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) property disposals

The target for the financial year is £1,000,000. Even though DRES is currently in the process of completing several disposals, no income has been received yet. We do not proactively look for land to dispose of. Land is only sold when we are approached by a resident requesting to buy the land; we only sell if it is of value to our tenants.

This revenue is particularly important for us to fund the Higher Value Property Levy (HVPL); the government has postponed the introduction of this tax but has stated they are still intending to put in place this manifesto commitment; to extend the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants and for local authorities to pay for this policy through the HVPL. However, we still do not know how much this levy will cost us and whether we want to use reserves or have sufficient reserves to pay the bill, meaning the income from disposals could be invaluable to us as a source of income.

Joint Community Safety and DRES report

Background papers

None

Report author: Louise Morris – Policy and Performance Manager
(Housing)

Tel No: 020 8921 5318

Email: louise.morris@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Report author: Jeremy Smalley – Assistant Director of Regeneration

Tel No: 020 8921 2244

Email: jeremy.smalley@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Reporting to: Peter O’Connell – Senior Assistant Director of Community Services

Tel: 020 8921 8192

Email: Peter.OConnell@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Reporting to: Pippa Hack – Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills
Tel: 020 8921 5519

Email: pippa.hack@royalgreenwich.gov.uk