



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report:

Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing

Tom Smith, Director of Direct Services

Tel: 0114 2735493

Report of: Ajman Ali, Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services

Report to: Housing Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 14 December 2023

Subject: Housing & Repairs Performance Report (Quarter 2) 2023/24

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Full	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA N/A				
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				

Purpose of Report:

This report provides the Committee with an overview of housing and repairs performance for a range of services within the remit of the Committee. This report covers the period up to quarter 2 (July – September) of 2023/24. The first part of the report provides an analysis of the performance, setting this within both the national and local context in which services are delivered.

A detailed appendix report is included with comparative data against other landlords and regulatory performance. The report allows the Committee to understand and comment on the performance delivery of housing and repairs services to both tenants and citizens.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Housing Policy Committee:

1. Notes the Performance Report update provided for up to quarter 2 of 2023/24
2. Highlights any issues of concern that they may wish to receive focussed analysis in future performance reports.

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 – Housing and Repairs Performance Report Quarter 2 2023/24

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: Helen Damon
		Legal: Rebecca Lambert
		Equalities & Consultation: Bashir Khan
		Climate: Nathan Robinson
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	Ajman Ali
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Cllr Douglas Johnson
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Janet Sharpe Tom Smith	Job Title: Director of Housing Director of Direct Services
	Date: 4 th December 2023	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Constitution of Sheffield City Council (the Council) delegates to Housing Policy Committee the responsibility for regular monitoring of data including performance and financial information. This includes monitoring the performance for both housing repairs and maintenance service and housing (public sector, private sector, and related functions) services.

This report summarises performance information for the Housing Policy Committee up to the end of quarter 2 (July to September) 2023/24. The report highlights areas of note, providing explanation where possible, to facilitate the Committee in monitoring housing and repairs performance.

- 1.2 This report highlights several key areas for the Committee to consider. The key performance areas reflect our [Landlord Commitments](#), [Tenant Satisfaction Measures \(TSMs\)](#) as required by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and other key housing and repairs performance measures.

The performance report is structured around the 3 main Landlord Commitments. An additional section about other housing support including homelessness and private rented homes is also included: -

1. We Will Offer A Range Of Quality Homes

- Repairs
- Health and Safety Compliance
- Fire and Building Safety
- Delivery of New Homes

2. We Will Take Care Of Your Neighbourhood

- How we are managing our neighbourhoods and how tenants feel about where they live

3. We Will Provide A Good Service To You

- Tenant contact and how tenants feel about their interactions with us

4. Provide Other Housing Support

- Helping to prevent homelessness
- Making private rented homes safe

- 1.3 We have participated in a mid-year benchmarking exercise on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) with Housemark. Housemark is the data-driven solutions provider for the UK housing sector and provides sector-wide comparisons for all 22 TSMs to help us understand how we are performing in comparison to other social housing providers. This allows us to compare performance with this national median (middle value)

average of all social housing providers as well as a comparative group of 'peers' – larger landlords more like Sheffield. Relevant median scores from this exercise are included within this report to allow Members to compare our performance.

- 1.4 Additional information can be found in the Housing and Repairs Performance Report Quarter 2 2023/24 that accompanies this report at Appendix 1. This is also shared with our newly established tenant-led Tenant Voices Matter Panel and the Customer Repairs Focus Group. This provides the opportunity for tenants to scrutinise our performance and provide feedback and thoughts prior to this report being presented to the Committee. The Appendix 1 report also captures all the performance measures we are required to collate and submit to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

2. Offering A Range of Quality Homes

2.1 Repair Volumes

High demand for our responsive repairs service has continued into Quarter 2, increasing by an average of 100 jobs per week compared to the first three months of the year. (Average demand is now at 2,700 new jobs per week compared to 2,000 in previous years). The ability to achieve repairs targets is strongly linked to demand. Service pressures in relation to working at heights and damp and mould repairs have continued and will only increase further as we enter the winter months. Additional recruitment to respond to increased repair volumes has proved difficult for some time (since the pandemic) and is a national issue in the construction labour market.

2.2 Right First Time

Right First Time is a key indicator for the repairs service. Performance on completing jobs Right First Time has further improved during Quarter 2, achieving an all-time high of over 87%. This is attributable to a sustained focus within the service of improved efficiency and customer excellence.

2.3 Customer Satisfaction with Repairs

Customer satisfaction with the repairs service is measured using both transactional and perception surveys. The Council are required to submit satisfaction information to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in the form of a perception survey. In addition, RMS also measure satisfaction with repairs after each 'transaction', meaning customers who have recently used the service and had a repair completed, are contacted, and asked about their experience. Both types of surveys are important for identifying different issues and getting feedback to help drive improvements to our repairs related services.

Housemark have reported that results from transactional surveys are typically around 15% higher than perception survey results. This is

reflected in our current repairs satisfaction scores (64% for the RSH's perception survey and 83% for the Council's transactional survey in quarter 2). Our challenge in 2023/24 is to close the gap, building upon recent performance improvement. Based on results submitted to Housemark, the peer median is 70%. This provides us with a target to work towards for the remainder of 2023/24.

Tenant satisfaction with the time taken to complete their repairs has improved this quarter (up 6% from quarter 1). This is a positive increase and reflects improvements made by the Repairs & Maintenance Service. Based on results submitted to Housemark, the peer median score for this measure is 66%. We will continue to work on completing repairs in a timely manner and on bringing satisfaction closer to the benchmark.

2.4 Disrepairs

The number of new disrepair claims has increased during quarter 2. There has been an increase in legal companies canvassing homes across Sheffield encouraging customers to make disrepair claims. We saw an influx of cases from one firm in September with the number of cases in quarter 2 spiking as a result.

The number of disrepair works orders completed has slightly increased which is positive. Whilst we continue to work through the backlog and high number of new cases, we will continue to monitor this closely as it is likely to fluctuate until we can operate on a business-as-usual basis.

We are also working to make improvements through our Disrepair Strategy Group which is focusing on identifying targets and actions for disrepair management. In September, we brought a disrepair position statement to Housing Committee which set out our early resolution implementation plan. We are committed to getting better at managing disrepair, and it remains one of our key priorities for this year.

2.5 Health and Safety Compliance

Gas safety remains a top priority for the service and performance has remained above 98% in the year so far. We have seen a slight improvement from 98.1% of properties having a valid gas certificate in quarter 1, to 98.6% in quarter 2. This is in line with a consistent improvement in our performance over the last 18 months. We are working hard to resolve our oldest cases but the evidence and casework for each property takes time to be built and requires intensive staffing resource to encourage customers to engage and make a successful appointment. We are also continuing to work with the Regulator of Social Housing to demonstrate progress and this performance improvement is a good sign that the work we are doing to tackle access issues is having a positive impact.

The percentage of homes with EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) certificates up to five-years-old remains consistent in quarter 2.

In line with updated guidance, we have moved from a ten-year to a five-year cycle and have plans in place to improve performance. Gaining access to some properties has been problematic, but the team are developing a robust procedure for these properties, and we are developing our communications to customers. In the longer term, we are looking to allocate additional resources to support the testing programme.

For quarter 2, we continue to report 100% compliance on other key health and safety compliance areas such as legionella, asbestos and communal passenger lift safety. Satisfaction that our tenants feel safe in their home remains one of our higher satisfaction scores at over 71% in quarter 2 which compares positively with our peers at 74%.

2.6 Fire Safety

Fire risk assessments are carried out on our high-rise tower blocks, Older People's Independent Living (OPIL) schemes and our low rise flat and maisonette blocks. Performance has been affected this quarter due to many of our risk assessors undertaking required health and safety training which has impacted this quarter's schedule. Going into quarter 3, we are working hard to catchup on missed assessments and expect to achieve full compliance for quarter 3.

Performance on completing repairs identified through Fire Risk Assessments remains an area of focus. The number of repairs completed within target time has improved in quarter 2 for high-rise and low-rise accommodation. However challenges still remain around access and supply chain issues.

2.7 Damp and Mould

We have seen increased reports of damp, mould and condensation reported in line with the national trend. Our dedicated damp and mould team undertakes a triage assessment of each report, taking into account the individual needs of each household.

Data collection and analysis is a key part of our response to dealing with damp and mould across the council housing stock.

2.8 Delivery of New Council Homes

We have delivered 14 new builds during quarter 2 across two sites, Daresbury View, and Berners Road. All the new builds we aim to deliver this year will be positioned at these sites and are a mix of 3 and 4 bed houses, and 1-bedroom apartments over the two sites. We have delivered a total of 26 new builds during the first half of this year. We also made 7 acquisitions in quarter 2. These were all general acquisitions and mean that we have delivered a total of 26 acquisitions so far in the year.

3. We Will Take Care Of Your Neighbourhood

3.1 Shared Spaces

Satisfaction levels around communal cleaning in quarter 2 (57%) have remained consistent with those reported in quarter 1. Housemark has recently reported that the peer median score for this measure of 64%. We will also continue to work with our neighbourhood teams to make improvements in this area especially around cleaning standards. Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods has increased from 60% in quarter 1, to 64% in quarter 2. This puts us level with the Housemark's peer median of 62% which reflects that we are performing similarly to other landlords on this measure. We continue to review both negative and positive comments to better understand what tenants feel we do well to look after their neighbourhoods, and where we need to improve.

3.2 Anti-social Behaviour

The volume of anti-social behaviour reports remained consistent in quarter 2. Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour has increased slightly from 57% in quarter 1 to 60% in quarter 2, higher than the Housemark peer median for this measure of 51% and the median for the sector as a whole at 58%. We are committed to ensuring that tenants receive excellent customer service and support on matters of ASB and tenancy enforcement. Victims will be supported and kept up to date on case progression. Subjects will be challenged and supported to make the change required and enforcement action will be timely and assertive. We also continue to monitor comments on this measure, to help us identify themes and potential areas we could focus our prevention efforts.

3.3 Managing Tenant Arrears

We recognise that the cost-of-living crisis continues to heavily affect some of our tenant's financial positions. Our focus remains reducing rent loss whilst identifying and helping those in need of additional support.

Our rent collection was 97% in quarter 2 which is a positive improvement on last quarter despite being slightly below target. We continue to encourage tenants to pay by direct debit where possible, and over half of our tenants now pay their rent with this method. We are also prioritising work around reducing our total rent arrears owed by current and former tenants. Officers continue to work with our former tenants to recover this money.

We have helped tenants to receive additional financial support, for example, through support from Yorkshire Water and additional hardship payments. We have awarded a total of £108k in hardship payments so far this year, and the average hardship award is around £626. This is usually sufficient to cover a few weeks rent, allowing people to get back

on track with their finances.

3.4 Improving Vacants

Work is continuing to reduce the number of days it takes to re-let our properties once they become vacant. The average number of days taken to re-let all empty properties slightly increased in quarter 2. This was due to delays in parts of the handover process. We are working to reduce this turnaround time in quarter 3. There was also an increase in quarter 2 of the number of homes empty but available to let due an increase the number of tenancies quit within the quarter. A new Housing Vacants Team has been set up and work has started to look at how some of these processes can be improved.

4.0 **We Will Provide A Good Service To You**

4.1 Overall Satisfaction

As part of our Neighbourhood Tenant Satisfaction survey, we ask tenants how satisfied they are with the overall council housing service.

Satisfaction with the overall service has improved slightly in quarter 2 at 63%. This is consistent with the Housemark peer median of 67%.

4.2 Complaints

Satisfaction with our approach to handling complaints has remained consistent this year, with only around 1 in 4 tenants (25%) telling us they feel satisfied. It is important to note that the difficulties we face around increasing satisfaction with our complaints handling are mirrored across the social housing sector. Satisfaction with complaint handling is the lowest scoring satisfaction measure across the whole sector, with the Housemark peer median being just 28% for this measure. Whilst this highlights that we are not alone in our low complaint handling scores, we recognise that this is still an important area for us to improve in, particularly given that we are currently performing below the benchmark.

4.3 Contacting The Service

Our satisfaction scores for customer contact remain low and we are aware improvements are needed. Tenants are telling us that getting through on the telephone is their main frustration. We have improved some of our processes and this is having an effect, as during quarter 2 the average waiting times for both housing and repairs calls have come down, with a particularly significant decrease in the waiting times for repairs calls. We will continue working to make it easier to contact us as the year progresses.

Tenants are telling us they are very satisfied with how well they are treated when they do contact us. This is our highest performance tenant satisfaction area, with a score of 81% for quarter 2. We are also performing above the Housemark peer median for this measure of 77%,

and the sector average of 78%. This indicates that most interactions between tenants and council officers are positive, and that staff continue to be helpful and professional under sometimes challenging circumstances.

In quarter 2, around half of tenants (52%) asked, told us they felt satisfied with opportunities to get involved. To help us improve in this area, we will soon be launching several new and refreshed tenant engagement opportunities including mystery shopping and a new tenant scrutiny panel. We have already received a high level of interest from tenants from different areas and backgrounds wanting to be involved. These changes will be captured in a new Tenant Engagement Strategy which will be presented at the Housing Policy Committee in January 2024.

5.0 Provide Other Housing Support

5.1 Helping to prevent homelessness

During quarter 2 our homelessness services continued to experience high demand in line with levels of homelessness being seen nationally. The ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the housing crisis remain a major challenge for us in reducing homelessness in the city. Positively, there has been an increase in the number of homelessness successful prevention outcomes in quarter 2, with 58 preventions in total.

The number of people in temporary accommodation has increased in quarter 2. We remain mindful that temporary accommodation offers just a short-term relief to people experiencing homelessness, and we continue to work towards getting people into more settled housing. We are working closely with registered providers in the city to increase their supply of affordable homes and liaise with landlords in the private rented sector to support growing demand for good quality, affordable housing in the city.

5.2 Making private rented homes safer

We are responsible for monitoring the health and safety standards of private rented homes across the city, ensuring that we are supporting private rented tenants to live safely in their homes. During quarter 2, we helped to make homes safer for 583 private rented tenants through the removal of Category 1 hazards or high scoring Category 2 hazards. Category 1 hazards are defined as a hazard that is a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety. Category 2 hazards are defined as less serious or less urgent but which still require attention to resolve. This number was particularly large due to the completion of works in communal areas of a building, resulting in hundreds of individuals being made safer. In addition, 42 fire safety hazards in the private sector have also been resolved in quarter 2.

6. How Does This Decision Contribute?

- 6.1 The Council is developing a set of City Goals in collaboration with our communities, partners, and stakeholders on a shared narrative that describes where we all want to be as a city. The City Goals will become a driving force to support our Council improvement journey and delivery planning. With the goals being developed collaboratively, a key aim is that this will promote a joined-up approach to delivering the goals.

The drafted goals include themes around thriving communities, and a green and resilient Sheffield – areas our housing services are likely to feed into.

In addition, a new longer term Sheffield Corporate Plan is being developed which will set out how we aim to achieve our City Goals. As the new goals emerge and the Sheffield Plan is developed, we will closely monitor and report on how housing and repairs performance is feeding into these. We will also focus on how we are collaborating with the relevant stakeholders.

7. Has There Been Any Consultation?

- 7.1 We regularly share performance information for our tenants through both our tenant newsletter and on Facebook. We have recently set up a new tenant-led group, the Tenant Voices Matter Panel, which will bring together tenants and Members of Housing Policy Committee ahead of each Committee meeting. This will give tenants the opportunity to input and feedback on our performance reporting, and our targets for performance. As part of our Engagement Strategy, we are looking at other ways we can involve tenants and share our performance information more widely. We are currently setting up a range of new tenant scrutiny forums. In these forums we will be sharing various performance updates with a view to becoming more transparent about our performance and getting feedback from our customers.

8. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

8.1 Equality Implications

- 8.1.1 This report provides the Committee with an overview of housing and repairs performance for a range of services within the remit of the Committee. Though there are no direct equality implications arising from this report, there are likely to be equality implications arising from the Council's response to many of the issues documented in this report. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken for the Council's response to these as needed.

8.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 8.2.1 There are no direct financial and commercial implications arising from this report. There may be financial and commercial implications arising from the Council's response to many of the issues documented in this report. Any budgetary implications that arise will need Member approval

and decisions around this may need to be made at a future Housing Policy Committee

8.3 Legal Implications

- 8.3.1 As this report is for noting, there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, but the report does provide an overview of the achievement of targets in the past quarter and highlights risk management considerations where appropriate. Any further legal implications arising out of matters raised in this report will be considered in detail in any future reports to the Housing Policy Committee.

8.4 Climate Implications

- 8.4.1 There are no direct climate implications arising from this report. There are likely to be climate implications arising from the Council's response to many of the issues documented in the first part of this report: climate impact assessments will be undertaken for these as needed.

8.4 Other Implications

- 8.4.1 There are no other direct implications of this report. There may be other implications arising from the Council's response to many of the issues documented in this report.

9. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 The Housing Policy Committee has delegated responsibility for the regular monitoring of data including performance and financial information, and the performance monitoring of Housing (public sector, private sector, and related functions) services. Therefore, no alternative options to the production of this report have been considered.

10. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 The Housing Policy Committee has delegated authority to monitor the performance of Housing and Repairs services to ensure that:
- The service is delivering for tenants, and that tenant satisfaction is closely monitored
 - Limited resources are maximised due to budgetary pressures
 - The Council is delivering on corporate priorities

Performance information is shared with external organisations such as the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman for scrutiny

