Agenda Item 12



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report:

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Report of:	eport of: Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services		
Report to:	Housing Policy Committee		
Date of Decision:	14 September 2023		
Subject:	Housing & Repairs Performa 1) 2023/24	ance Report (Quarter	
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes No x If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? (Insert reference number)			
Has appropriate consultation taken place?		Yes No x	
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?		Yes No x	
Does the report contain confident	tial or exempt information?	Yes No x	
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 1 (April – June) of 2023/2024. 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 1 of 2023/2024
- **2.** Highlights any issues of concern that they may wish to discuss in future performance reports

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 – Housing and Repairs Performance Report Quarter 1 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, where required.	Finance: Helen Damon	
		Legal: Meurig Tiley	
		Equalities & Consultation: n/a	
		Climate: n/a	
	Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.		
2	EMT 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 EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.		
	Lead Officer Name: Janet Sharpe	Job Title: Director of Housing	
	Tom Smith	Director of Direct Services	
	Date:		

1. Proposal

1.1 Housing Committee is responsible for regularly monitoring performance

The Constitution of Sheffield City 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 the performance information for the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service (HNS) and the Repairs and Maintenance Service (RMS) up to the end of quarter 1 (April to June) 2023/2024. The report highlights areas of note, providing explanation where possible, to facilitate the Committee in monitoring housing and repairs performance.

1.2 The report highlights several key housing and repairs related performance areas

This report highlights several key areas for the Committee to consider. The key performance areas reflect our <u>Landlord Commitments</u>, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) as required by the <u>Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)</u> and other key housing and repairs performance measures.

The performance report has therefore been structured around the 3 main Landlord Commitments. An additional section about other housing support such as homelessness and private rented homes is also included:

1. Offering a range of quality homes

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

2. Take care of our neighbourhoods

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

3. Providing a good service

Tenant contact and how tenants feel about their interactions with us

4. Other housing support

- Helping to prevent homelessness
- Making private rented homes safe

1.3 The appendix report includes additional performance information

Additional information can be found in the appendix that accompanies this report.

This is also shared with our tenant-led Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP) and the Customer Repairs Focus Group. This provides the opportunity for tenants to scrutinise our performance and provide feedback and thoughts. The appendix report also captures all the performance measures we are required to collate and submit to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

2. We will offer a range of quality homes

2.1 Repair Volumes

2.1.1 The repairs service continues to experience significant demand pressures

Demand for our responsive repairs service has increased by 30% - 40% compared to pre-pandemic levels. For the first time the volume of responsive repairs exceeded an average of over 2,600 new repairs each week in quarter 1 of 2023-24. In previous years they averaged around 2,000 new responsive repairs per week.

As a consequence, the proportion of responsive repairs completed on time has reduced from 91.05% in quarter 4 20220-2023, to 83.61% in quarter 1 2023-2024. We have also seen a slight reduction in overall customer satisfaction following a responsive repair being carried out, from 81% in quarter 4 to 79.21% in quarter 1 (see 2.3.2 below).

It should be noted that the service is currently reviewing its approach to responsive repairs, given the continued demand and performance issues. In the process of that review we have identified some potential issues with the way in which responsive repairs completion is being reported and analysed, which may mean that performance has been reported as higher than it should have been. This will be rectified and reported as part of the quarter 2 update.

2.1.2 Overdue repairs have increased due to high demand

Despite improvements in productivity the number of overdue responsive and planned repairs has increased during Quarter 1. This will remain a challenge whilst the service continues to experience significantly higher demand than was historically the case.

Whilst we have recently attempted to recruit additional resources into responsive repairs, recruitment is very challenging given the construction labour market. The service is therefore highly reliant on the use of subcontractors, who have had similar recruitment and resourcing issues, to deal with the additional demand in the short-term.

In terms of planned repairs, volumes have remained in line with last year, however the council has experienced a steep increase in the number of disrepair claims over the last few years in line with the nationwide trend. This has severely impacted upon our ability to complete planned works.

2.1.3 Reported performance for emergency repairs is not currently accurate

The figure reported for emergency repairs completed on time is well below target. However, we have identified an issue with the way in which the operational ICT system records and reports emergency repairs. This is being rectified and reported performance is expected to improve significantly in the latter part of 2023-2024.

2.2 Right First Time

2.2.1 Right First Time is a key indicator for the repairs service

We continue to drive productivity in the workforce through a focus on 'Right First Time' repairs and customer excellence.

'Right First Time' performance stands at 84% at the end of quarter one, the highest performance achieved by the service to date and an improvement from 80% in the same period last year.

The service continues to focus on achieving improved performance during thorough analysis of incorrect diagnosis of repairs and remedying under performance in relation to parts, materials, and standard of work.

2.3 Customer Satisfaction with Repairs

2.3.1 Repairs satisfaction is measured using transactional and perception surveys

Customer satisfaction with the repairs service is measured using both transactional and perception surveys.

The Council are required to submit satisfaction information to the RSH in the form of a perception survey. Requirements have been set out by the RSH for this, therefore the survey asks a random sample of tenants about their satisfaction with the repairs service

if they had received a repair within the last 12 months. These perception survey scores are the ones that will be made public by the Regulator of Social Housing in 2024.

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. The nature of a transactional survey means that the tenant is being asked if they are happy with a service, or transaction, (in this case a repair), when it has been completed. This provides a different perspective on our satisfaction levels.

Perception and transactional surveys do however generate different results which is reflected as part of the performance reporting in 2022/23 and as part of this report for quarter 1 2023/24.

2.3.2 As a result, there is disparity in repairs customer satisfaction depending on the type of survey

Repairs satisfaction as part of the RSH requirements has shown slight improvements in quarter 1 in comparison to 2022/23 performing at around 64%. Quarter 1 performance in this area highlights the gap in satisfaction levels when we compare satisfaction reported through the housing tenant satisfaction survey and the transactional repairs service survey.

Customer satisfaction measured via transactional surveys has slightly reduced from 81% in quarter 4 to 79% in quarter 1 using our transactional surveys. Every case where a customer expresses dissatisfaction is rectified, and lessons learnt. The main drivers of dissatisfaction include waiting times at the contact centre and communication with customers.

Housemark (the leading data and insight company for the UK housing sector), have reported that results from transactional surveys are typically around 15% higher than perception survey results. Our challenge in 2023/24 is to close the gap, building upon recent performance improvement.

As part of the RSH's requirements, we will also report on satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair. Tenant satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair fell from 59% (2022-2023 overall) to 55% in quarter1. Falling satisfaction in this area likely reflects the continuing high demand for repairs, level of overdue jobs and difficulties in sourcing materials and labour shortages.

In April 2023, Housemark forecasted that during 2023/24 the pressure on repairs services will continue, as landlords take action to tackle damp and mould alongside other work on homes. Housemark also commented, "While there have been some positive signs in the construction industry of lower inflation and increased labour supply, the real-terms financial situation for many landlords will mean that they cannot achieve better service delivery by spending more money, as resources and capacity are already stretched."

2.4 Disrepairs

2.4.1 The service is completing more disrepair cases against a backdrop of increased claims

Disrepair case completions per quarter have remained above 100 cases for quarter 1. The repairs service is increasing capacity to respond to the volume of cases and (during quarter 1, 148 new claims were received) to improve performance during the remainder of 2023-2024.

The service continues to prioritise completing the oldest cases first, resulting in a drop in cases completed within time. (N.B. This relates to jobs completed within the Council's timescale of 55 days rather than a legal timescale).

A position statement on disrepairs which provides an update on Council Housing disrepair cases and an update on the early resolution implementation plan will be presented at the same Housing Policy Committee as this report.

2.5 Health and Safety Compliance

2.5.1 Gas safety performance has been sustained and we are striving for 100% compliance

Gas safety remains a top priority for the service and performance has remained around the 98% mark.

A new Gas Action Team has been established to focus on cases which have listed no response after 3 letters and failed visits. A Rapid Improvement Event was held in June 2023 and the recommendations from this exercise are being implemented with the intention of sustaining the current trend of improved access. This will include the identification of properties which have proved to be problematic in previous years and targeting them for intensive activity.

2.5.2 Improvements

The percentage of homes with EICR (Electrical

needed around electrical safety certificates

Installation Condition Report) certificates up to fiveyears-old remains at 66% in quarter 1. In line with updated guidance, we have moved from a ten-year to a five-year cycle and have been targeting properties with EICR's older than 5 years first. Gaining access to some properties has been problematic, however we are following a robust access procedure to enable us to carry out this work.

2.5.3 We continue to be compliant with other health and safety

measures

For quarter 1, we continue report 100% 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 70% in quarter 1.

2.6 Fire Safety

2.6.1 We are compliant with our fire risk assessments

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. All fire risk assessments due for quarter 1 have been completed. Following the assessment, any repairs or any further non repair actions that are required are then reported and to be actioned.

2.6.2 Fire stopping performance is below target due to access and supply issues

Performance on completing repairs identified through Fire Risk Assessments remains an area of focus.

Performance has significantly improved in low rise and older person's accommodation with 94% and 93% of fire risk assessment repairs completed in target during Quarter 1. The challenge lies with improving performance in high rise accommodation where the service is experiencing significant access and supply chain issues.

2.7 Damp and Mould

2.7.1 We are responding sector-wide damp and mould concerns

We continue to see high levels of damp, mould and condensation reported in line with the national trend. Our dedicated damp and mould team is being expanded to ensure we can respond to all issues within our five-day target.

We are building our intelligence of damp and mould cases across the city so we can develop the most appropriate response and interventions to resolve any issues that are identified. A new Damp. Mould and Condensation Policy and self-assessment against Housing Ombudsman recommendations will also be presented to the same Housing Policy Committee as this report.

2.8 Delivery of new council homes

2.8.1 We are continuing to deliver new council homes in 2023/24

Our target for the stock increase programme in 2023/24 is to deliver 164 homes (114 acquisitions and 50 new builds). In quarter 1 we have acquired 19 new homes (15 being general acquisitions located across the city) and 4 new build acquisitions at Owlthorpe.

The 50 new build sites expected to be delivered in 2023/24 include 44 units at Daresbury and Berners (Park & Arbourthorne area) and 6 units at Fraser Road (Woodseats). In quarter 1 12 new homes at the Daresbury and Berners sites have been built and handed over to the HNS. A further 10 new homes at these sites are expected to be ready in quarter 2. The remaining units will be delivered in 2023/24, with the 6 units at Fraser Road expected to be ready in quarter 4.

3. We will take care of your neighbourhood

3.1 Shared living spaces

3.1.1 Improvements still needed to boost satisfaction with communal cleaning

It is important that we provide and maintain good quality communal facilities for the over 45% of tenant households who live in flats and maisonettes. We ask tenants living in our flats and maisonette blocks specifically about communal cleaning, shared green spaced and waste management. Satisfaction levels around communal cleaning in quarter 1 have remained consistent with those reported in 2022/23. We are continuing to work our neighbourhood teams to make improvements in this area especially around cleaning standards.

3.1.2 Satisfaction with housing waste management is improving

Satisfaction with communal waste management and recycling facilities have continued to perform well in quarter 1. Satisfaction in these areas have improved since 2022/23 suggesting the work of our Estates and Environmental team are carrying out in these areas is having a sustained positive impact.

3.1.3 Perceptions about shared green space and how we

Tenant perceptions of our maintenance of shared green areas and positive contribution to their neighbourhoods have both fallen in quarter 1. Tenants may view the services they receive as council wide,

contribute to the neighbourhood still needs improvement rather than housing specific and this impacts on the satisfaction levels and our response. We are reviewing the comments to help identify issues that are housing specific so these can be fed-back to the neighbourhoods and estate teams and actioned. Where is identified that dissatisfaction is associated with wider council services, then we will need to work with those services to address the issues raised.

3.2 Anti-social behaviour

3.2.1 Tenants perception of how we deal with anti-social behaviour remains a challenge

Tenant satisfaction with our approach to handling antisocial behaviour remained consistent in quarter 1 with our performance during 2022/23. This is a perception question so will include responses from tenants who may have never formally reported anti-social behaviour to us. Scores last year were particularly low amongst tenants who had quit a tenancy and a similar trend remains in quarter 1. It will be important for us to continue to monitor these comments and survey response information to further identify themes and trends and to help pin point key areas that could help to prevent this.

3.3 Managing tenant arrears

3.3.1 We continue to prioritise supportive income collection

At the end of quarter 1, total arrears stood at around £16.3 million. Former tenants arrears has reduced to £5.06 million and current arrears stood at around £11.4 million. The increase in current arrears is not unexpected. We are seeing increasing debt levels for tenants due to the cost-of-living crisis that continues to affect tenants ability to pay. Staff are taking a proactive approach to income collection and therefore helping to reduce rent loss.

We are active in area officers working collaboratively with neighbourhood teams to resolve complex tenant issues and therefore reduce arrears. We are proactively visiting tenants to ensure that they are receiving quality advice and can make rent payments. We also now have a presence in a number of foodbanks, offering advice and support to tenants who present at foodbanks. The reduction in former tenant arrears is due the proactive approach we are taking with statute barred debt which is leading to an increase in write offs.

3.4 Improving vacants

3.4.1 Properties still remain empty for too long

The demand for council homes remains high and therefore it is important that we can have as many of our council homes available to be re-let once vacated. There can be several reasons why an empty property has not been let. Some homes require extensive repairs for them to be ready for a new tenant to move in or certain types of properties may be harder to let.

Work is continuing to take place to improve this process and to improve the number of days it takes from a tenant handing in the keys to a new tenant moving in. We know improvements are needed in this area as for every property that stands empty there is a loss of income into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). A new Housing Vacants Team has been set up and is currently being recruited to. The team is expected to be operational from November- December 2023. The team will be focusing initially on 3 main areas to improve performance - reduction in key safe fitting times; process improvements with temporary accommodation relets and reclassifying new acquisitions, with further savings that will start to be realised in 2024/25, by further streamlining processes and driving efficiencies.

4. We will provide a good service to you

4.1 Overall Satisfaction

4.1.1 Overall satisfaction remains consistent but still performing under target

For quarter 1 we have asked nearly 1,400 council tenants how satisfied they are with several aspects of the services as part of our Neighbourhood Tenant Satisfaction survey. The survey includes TSMs that align with requirements from the RSH. Satisfaction with the overall service in quarter 1 has performed consistently with 2022/23 performance. The main reasons for tenant dissatisfaction in quarter 1 are also consistent with 2022/23. This includes long waiting times for repairs and getting through on the phone. More work will need to take place in 2023/24 to ensure that we are feeding back what our tenants are telling us and to work with the relevant teams and departments if we are going to improve our satisfaction scores.

4.2 Complaints

4.2.1 Complaints satisfaction has fallen

Overall satisfaction with how we deal with complaints was 45% in 2022/23, however this included some changes mid-year by the RSH to how this question

was to be asked (only tenants who have made a formal complaint in the last year are now asked this in line with RSH requirements). Quarter 4 performance in 2022/23 therefore dropped as a result and performance into quarter 1 2023/24 has continued to perform at a similar level.

We continue to work to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code to ensure we are compliant with how we are expected as a social landlord to manage customer complaints. We have undertaken a self-assessment over the last 3 months to review our policies, procedures, information provided to customers, training materials, customer satisfaction data and performance information – to assess how well we comply with each element of the Code. As a result we have an action plan in place to help us make any necessary improvements and to address any gaps as a result of the self-assessment.

4.3 Contacting the service

4.3.1 Contacting us remains frustrating for tenants

Tenants remain frustrated with getting through to us on the phone as reflected by the low satisfaction score for how easy it is to contact us. There has been an 8% drop in performance in this area in quarter 1. Some of this is due to avoidable contact, for example, chasing up existing requests. We are working with the contact centre to try and reduce this which would help to reduce call waiting times. Call waiting times have reduced in quarter 1 but we will continue to monitor customer feedback as we know this is an area that is contributing highly to dissatisfaction with the overall service.

4.3.2 Tenants feel they are treated fairly and with respect when they do get through to us

Tenants are telling us they are very satisfied with how well they are treated when they do contact us, however. This is our highest performance tenant satisfaction area, with a score of 79% for quarter 1. This indicates that a vast majority of interactions between tenants and council officers are positive and that staff continue to be helpful and professional under sometimes challenging circumstances.

4.3.3 Communicating and finding new ways of engaging with tenants is important

We continue to develop a variety of ways for tenants to engage with us and have started to make improvements around how we share housing and repairs information. Our monthly ebulletin *Your Home Your Neighbourhood* is sent out to over 28,500 subscribers providing useful information about

developments within the service as well as sharing our performance information and how we are responding to it. Our Facebook page continues to grow with over 5,000 followers at the end of quarter 1. This is another way of keeping our tenants informed.

Earlier this year, HNS launched two new engagement platforms "Engagement Pitstop" – which enables tenants to find out and have their say on current consultations within the service and find out about ways they can get involved. Also a Tenants and Residents Virtual Community - which is a page designed for tenants, residents and community groups to connect with one another.

There are also plans in 2023/24 to refresh our tenant engagement activities, with the relaunch of a tenant scrutiny panel and other ways for tenants to get involved such as mystery shopping. A full report will be brought to the Housing Policy Committee about this in November 2023. These will be tenant-led and will help to drive performance in areas that matter most to tenants. By being more open and transparent, satisfaction levels will hopefully improve around how we keep tenants informed about things that matter to them and that we are listening to tenant views and acting upon them.

5. Providing wider housing support

5.1 Helping to prevent homelessness

5.1.1 There continues to be an increase in demand for our homelessness services

Our homelessness services continue to experience high demand into 2023/24. There has been a national increase in homelessness and with the continued impact of the cost of living crisis, this remains a major challenge for us as well as for other core cities. Increasing numbers in temporary accommodation are reflective of the increasing number of those who present as homeless who are eligible and will be provided with emergency housing pending a decision on their case.

The number of successful prevention outcomes has reduced in quarter 1, however a Homeless Prevention Team is now in place and improvements to triage arrangements to identify prevention cases and act on them earlier should help to drive improvements in this area.

We are continuing to work with partners to improve the earlier help and system wide improvements. We are also working with other social housing providers to address homelessness prevention and expand the number of homes available where we can.

Rough sleeping remains at a relatively low level and improvements in the service offer for those with entrenched patterns of rough sleeping are planned for this year.

5.2 Making private rented homes safer

5.2.1 We continue to support private rented tenants to live safely

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 1, we helped to make homes safer for 365 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 still required attention to resolve. In addition, 31 fire safety hazards in the private sector have also been resolved in quarter 1.

6. How does this decision contribute?

6.1 Housing and Repairs performance feeds into the broader corporate priorities in several areas

Our Sheffield - Priorities and Delivery Plan 2022-23

The Council have developed a new set of strategic priorities for 2023/2024 (Our Sheffield – Administration Priorities) with the intention for these priorities to form the basis of the new medium term Corporate Plan which is currently in development. To help support this, the Our Sheffield Delivery Plan 2022-23 has been developed. The plan focuses on some of the key challenges the Council need to address before more longer-term strategic goals can be achieved. There are several areas in which housing performance feeds into broader corporate priorities, and as the new Corporate Plan emerges from the administration priorities, we will continue to monitor and report on how we are performing against broader corporate priorities.

7. Has there been any consultation?

7.1 Consultation

There has been no consultation on this report,

may be
undertaken in
response to
issues
documented in
this report

however, it is anticipated that the Committee's response to issues documented in the report may necessitate future consultation. We do regularly report to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP) and the Repairs Customer Focus Group wherein we seek input and feedback from our tenants on our performance reporting, and our targets for performance.

7.2 We will look at other ways we can share performance information

As part of our Engagement Strategy, we will look at other ways we can involve tenants and share our performance information more widely.

8. Risk analysis and implications of the decision

8.1 No new equality implications but some may arise from our response to highlighted issues

Equality Implications

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 these as needed.

8.2 No new financial implications but some may arise from our response to highlighted issues

Financial and Commercial Implications

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 No new legal implications but some may arise from our response to highlighted issues

Legal Implications

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 will be considered in any future reports to the Housing Policy Committee.

8.4 No new climate implications

Climate implications

but some may arise from our response to highlighted issues 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.

8.5 No other new implications but some may arise from our response to highlighted issues

Other Implications

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 No other options were considered

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 Housing Policy Committee has delegated authority to monitor performance

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 in 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