



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report:

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Tel: 0114 2735493

Report of: Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services

Report to: Housing Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 8 June 2023

Subject: Housing Performance Report (Quarter 4) 2022/23

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|---|-----|--------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i> | | | | |
| Has appropriate consultation taken place? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Purpose of Report:

This report provides the Committee with an overview of housing performance for a range of services within the remit of the Committee. This report covers the period up to quarter 4 (January – March) of 2022/2023. 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.

More detailed appendices are 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 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 4 of 2022/2023
2. Highlights any issues of concern that they may wish to discuss in future performance reports

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 – Housing Performance Report Q4 2022/23

| Lead Officer to complete:- | | |
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| 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: Nadine Wynter |
| | | Equalities & Consultation: n/a |
| | | Climate: n/a |
| | <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 | 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 |
| | Date: 30.05.23 | |

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| 1. | Proposal | |
| 1.2 | Housing Committee is responsible for regularly monitoring performance | <p>The Constitution of Sheffield City Council delegates to Housing Policy Committee the responsibility for regular monitoring of data including performance and financial information, and for monitoring the performance of housing services (public sector, private sector, and related functions).</p> <p>This report summarises the performance information for housing services up to the end of quarter 4 for the 2022/2023 financial year. The report highlights areas of note, providing explanation where possible, to facilitate the Committee in monitoring housing performance.</p> |
| 1.2 | The report highlights several key property and people related performance areas | <p>Key performance areas</p> <p>This report highlights several key areas for the Committee.</p> <p>The key property focused areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety compliance • Damp and mould • Fire and building safety • Delivery of new council housing <p>The key people focused areas area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost-of-living crisis and its impact on tenants and our services • How we are managing our neighbourhoods and how tenants feel about where they live • Tenant contact and how tenants feel about their interactions with us |
| 1.3 | The appendix report includes additional performance information | <p>Additional information on performance of the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service can be found in the appendix report that accompanies this report.</p> <p>This is also shared with the tenant-led Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP) to facilitate the monitoring of the delivery of the Landlord Commitments to tenants. 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) from April 2023.</p> |
| 1.4 | There is a | A separate performance report on the Repairs and |

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| separate Repairs and Maintenance report | Maintenance Service (RMS) will be presented to the Housing Policy Committee in addition to this report. |
| 2. How are our property-related services performing? | |
| 2.1 Health and Safety Compliance | |
| 2.1.1 Gas safety compliance has improved significantly | We have worked hard over the past quarter to improve compliance on gas safety. Following our self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), we have worked closely with the RSH to ensure our gas safety performance was brought back on track. In December 2022 we agreed a new Gas Safety Policy, we also put in place a new fast track process for dealing with access issues and brought in additional resources to manage our backlog cases. |
| 2.1.2 We are responding sector-wide damp and mould concerns | <p>During 2022/23 there has been a significant increase in damp and mould reports following increased media attention and awareness. The service has responded positively and a Damp and Mould Task Force is now in place to review the council's approach, with the aim of reducing damp and mould in our homes and improving how reports of damp and mould are managed.</p> <p>The Damp and Mould Task Force has now established three subgroups, Performance and Data, Operational and Communications and Complaints to lead on specific workstreams as directed by the Damp and Mould Task Force. These subgroups bring together internal teams from across the Council and wider multi-agency partners to collectively improve our knowledge of the prevalence of damp and mould in our city. This will, more importantly, help to identify our greatest risks and inform operational actions to safeguard tenants in social and private housing homes.</p> <p>The Performance and Data Group focus is to take action to improve data quality, maturity and reporting to inform operational action and longer-term investment to reduce the risk of harm from damp and mould. Progress is being made in this space and the Damp and Mould Task Force will agree a reporting dashboard which will continue to evolve iteratively. In addition, we are exploring opportunities with our multi-agency partners to improve data collection and sharing to contribute to our data profile.</p> |

2.2 Fire and building safety

2.2.1 We have been experiencing some issues with fire risk assessments Fire risk assessments were all completed on time for our high rise and Older Persons Independent Living (OPIL) properties during quarter 4. A shortage in resource during quarter 4 resulted in not all low-rise properties being assessed on time, resulting in performing under our overall target of 100% for this measure in 2022/23. We are reviewing resources to ensure this is brought back on track in 2023/24.

2.2.2 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 4, we helped to make homes safer for 395 private rented tenants through the removal of Category 1 hazards or high scoring Category 2 hazards. We have made a total of 1,029 private rented tenants' homes safer in 2022/23. 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.

A total of 125 fire safety hazards in the private sector were resolved in 2022/23. There was a surge in the number of removals during quarter 4. This was due to lot of enquiries made during the colder months relating to colder and wetter weather problems like damp and mould.

2.3 Delivery of new council homes

2.3.1 We have continued to deliver new council housing throughout 2022/23 Market conditions, budget reviews and resourcing impacts have affected our ambitions for delivering new homes this year. However we hit our revised target of 177 new build properties and were just 4 properties short of our acquisitions target of 97.

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan review process and approval for 2023/2024 onwards will lead to a reprogramming of the new build element of the Stock Increase Programme in line with our strategic priorities.

We will continue to monitor market conditions and the other pressures on the delivery of new homes in the year ahead.

3. How are our people-related services performing?

3.1 Cost-of-living

3.1.1 The cost-of-living crisis continues to affect tenants

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact our tenants with many continually having to make tough decisions around eating, heating, and debt. Our Hardship Fund payments are non-repayable grants awarded to people to help them through hardship and to support them with living costs. In 2022/23 we have awarded just over £150k in Hardship Fund payments, helping to support 279 of our council housing tenants. These payments continue to support financially struggling tenants to remain in their homes and lessen their financial burdens. Throughout 2022/23 we have also supported tenants in other ways including offering targeted help to vulnerable tenants; training housing staff on utilising the Council's cost-of-living toolkit and working with partners such as Citizens Advice, foodbanks, and charities.

3.1.2 We continue to prioritise supportive income collection

By the end of quarter 4, rent arrears had reduced, standing at around £15.8m. However, the substantial number of ongoing arrears does reflect the continual challenges we face with arrears collection. We are seeing increasing debt levels owed by tenants who are leaving Council properties, and in the current climate it is becoming more difficult to then collect this once they are living elsewhere. Despite the challenges, staff have continued to help the service reduce rent loss by work closely with tenants, supporting them to manage their money and understand their commitment to paying rent and other charges.

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

Our homelessness services have experienced high demand this year, with the number of homeless presentations and acceptances being at their highest ever levels. By the end of quarter 4 there had been more than 4,000 homeless presentations across the year. There were around 500 more presentations in 2022/2023 than in the previous year, reflecting the increase in demand we are currently seeing across Sheffield. Councils across England are reporting similar rises in homeless presentations, with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis being amongst reported reasons for this.

There has also been a sustained increase in temporary accommodation occupancy in Sheffield this year. In quarter 1, the total number of households in temporary accommodation was 437. By quarter 4 this had risen to

575. This is significantly above the service's target of 310 and reflects a worrying increase in the number of people living in insecure housing. We are responding to this rising demand with plans to increase our stock of temporary accommodation which should help us better cope with high demand in the year ahead. We know that temporary accommodation offers just a short-term relief to people experiencing homelessness and continue to work with the target of offering more long-term solutions for people.

3.2 Managing our neighbourhoods

3.2.1 Overall satisfaction has remained consistent in 2022/23 but performed below target

During 2022/23 we have asked over 3,000 council tenants how satisfied they are with several aspects of the services as part of our Neighbourhood Tenant Satisfaction survey. The survey includes the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) that align with requirements from the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) that we will need to report on from 2023/24. Satisfaction with the overall service has performed consistently across the year, with a 2022/23 score of 63%. Housemark have reported declines in overall satisfaction across the sector so is a national trend and year on year satisfaction scores satisfaction with the overall service has fallen steadily over the last 5 years. The main reasons for tenant dissatisfaction over the year have included long waiting times for repairs and getting through on the phone.

3.2.2 Improvements needed to boost satisfaction with communal services and facilities

Satisfaction around communal cleaning remains an area in which we would like to improve. We have been asking our tenants specifically living in our flats and maisonette blocks as part of our tenant satisfaction survey about this and we are reviewing the comments we have received about our cleaning standards and feeding this back to the neighbourhood teams.

Satisfaction with communal waste management and recycling facilities both performed highly during quarter 4 with both meeting our target of 70% satisfaction for the first time this year. We have consistently improved tenant satisfaction with these measures over the year, showing that the work our Estates and Environmental Service team are carrying out in these areas is having a positive impact.

3.2.3 Tenant perception of how we deal

Anti-social behaviour appears to be of growing concern to our tenants. Throughout the year, satisfaction with our approach to handling of anti-social behaviour has

with anti-social behaviour is an area of concern

consistently fallen, its lowest being at 52% for quarter 4. It is important to highlight that this is a perception question and therefore includes responses from tenants who may have never formally reported anti-social behaviour to us. Scores were particularly low amongst tenants who were quitting a tenancy. This perhaps reflects lots of tenants are affected by low level anti-social behaviour that may not be reported, but which still causes nuisance or annoyance. It will be important for us to continue monitoring comments going forwards to identify themes.

More positively, satisfaction with the speed of service received when people first report an anti-social behaviour complaint has improved across the year and was 65% in quarter 4. This information is collated as part of a service specific survey (transactional survey) which is asked to tenant's who have recently used made an anti-social behaviour complaint or enquiry. Whilst we still have a way to go in meeting our target of 78%, it reflects that we are getting better at responding quicker when people are making direct reports to us.

3.3 Tenant contact

3.3.1 Contacting us remains frustrating for tenants

Satisfaction with the contact centre was 60% in quarter 4, which is consistent with much of 2022/23. Tenants remain frustrated with getting through to us on the phone with many reporting long waiting times, or difficulties chasing existing requests.

New recruits becoming operational on all call types helped the Contact Centre improve waiting times in quarter 4 which is positive. Waiting times for housing customers calling the Contact Centre have fallen from 16.3 minutes in quarter 1 to 12 minutes in quarter 4. We know that we need to maintain these improvements going into 2023/24 as it will take time and consistency to affect any tenant perceptions

3.3.2 Complaints satisfaction has fallen

Tenant satisfaction with the handling of complaints has fallen to 26% in quarter 4. This has dipped from 51% in quarter 3. A change in the way that this question is being asked is partly the reason for this drop - only tenants who have made a formal complaint in the last year are now asked this in line with RSH requirements. The Housing and Neighbourhoods Service have been working alongside the Corporate Complaints teams in 2022/23 to improve staff access and training, data recording and response rates.

3.3.3 We are changing how we communicate with tenants

We continue to develop our approach to communicating with tenants. This year we have increasingly utilised things like e-bulletins, direct emails, and our Housing and Neighbourhoods Service Facebook page. By the end of quarter 4 the page had over 136,000 reaches, which is the number of people who saw the page or content in their news feed. We have also started sharing more performance information with our tenants both on our Facebook page and in e-bulletins to increase our transparency and keep tenants informed on how we are performing. We also continue to work with tenant groups who prefer offline communications, working closely with Tenant and Residents Associations to share information and gather their feedback. It's important to us that we offer a range of communication methods that suit the different needs of our tenants.

Satisfaction that we keep tenants informed about the things that matter to them was 65% in quarter 4 which is a slight dip from last quarter and falls below our target of 70%. Going forwards we will continue to ask tenants what they want us to tell them more about and incorporate this into both our online and offline communications in the hope that we can boost this score.

4. How does this decision contribute?

4.1 Housing 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.

5. Has there been any consultation?

5.1 Consultation may be

There has been no consultation on this report, however, it is anticipated that the Committee's response to issues

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| | undertaken in response to issues documented in this report | documented in the report may necessitate future consultation. We do regularly report to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP) wherein we seek input and feedback from our tenants on our performance reporting, and our targets for performance. |
| 5.2 | 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. |
| 6. | Risk analysis and implications of the decision | |
| 6.1 | 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. |
| 6.2 | 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. |
| 6.3 | No new legal implications but some may arise from our response to highlighted issues | Legal Implications Specific legal issues arising for consideration have been correctly explained at the relevant points in the report. Save for those no legal implications arise from this report. Any further legal implications will be considered in any future reports to the Housing Policy Committee. |
| 6.4 | No new climate implications but some may arise from our response to highlighted issues | Climate implications 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. |

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| 6.5 | 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. |
| 7. Alternative options considered | | |
| 7.1 | 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. |
| 8. Reasons for recommendations | | |
| 8.1 | Housing Policy Committee has delegated authority to monitor performance | The Housing Policy Committee has delegated authority to monitor the performance of Housing services to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |

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