

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Service Plan – Monitor 1 update 2008-9

Critical Success Factors

1. Remaining on target to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010

We remain on target to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard by the deadline date of 2010 through delivery of the Council's Housing Capital Programme (progress with the Capital Programme is reported elsewhere on this agenda)

2. Improved performance across Housing Services Functions

▪ Income Management

- Quarter one targets for both rent collection and rent arrears have been met (see table *Resource measures*) below.
- Work has commenced on a self-assessment against the Audit Commission's 'Key Lines of Enquiry' for Income Management.

▪ Void Management

- Average relet times continue to reduce. In the first quarter of 2008-9 the average re-let time was 17.5 days, against a target of 18. This also represents continuous improvement from the average for 2007-8 of 19.37 days.
- A new void process was introduced May 2008 with following a systems review of void management; weekly monitoring meetings took place during the early stages of implementation. An analysis of the impact of the changes will commence after three months of operation.
- We have also introduced a void standard for empty homes, and quality monitoring systems are in place.
- Satisfaction with the new standard will be measured via the regular 'new homes questionnaire' sent to all council tenants when they move into a new home.
- Rent loss from void properties at the end of the first quarter was on target at 0.27%

▪ Responsive repairs

- The service has been the subject of an end-to-end review using a 'systems thinking' approach in order to improve outcomes for customers.
- Key staff have been consulted and training sessions held to ensure changes to priorities, job codes and appointment systems can be successfully executed once phased implementation commences
- A focus group was held earlier this year and to discuss the proposed recommendations and during the remainder of the project a further customer consultation will take place to form part of the evaluation process. Tenants will also be updated via an article in Streets Ahead in September and an update to the York Federation in September. Following a review of the pilot further consultation with tenants and members will be carried out. The pilot implementation of these

changes following the end to end review of the has been delayed due to I.T. interface problems which have extended the date for commencement of the pilot until the 3rd September 2008.

- **Tackling Anti Social Behaviour**

- A new IT module has been developed which will enable improved recording and monitoring of anti-social behaviour and nuisance issues.
- Discussions have been held with Housing Associations in York about taking cases through the multi-agency Nuisance Action Group (NAG) as part of their efforts in tackling anti-social behaviour, and potentially purchasing services from the CYC housing Tenancy Enforcement Team. This could assist in reducing anti-social behaviour on multi-tenure estates.

3. Consolidate our approach to customer service

- Clear standards have been developed for staff to follow in dealing with customers and colleagues.
- A staff group has been established to monitor and develop the standards, and the information has been embedded into the induction process for new staff

Other Achievements

Service Improvements

- Piloting of mobile working using mini-laptop computers has commenced in Housing Operations and Asset Management teams however connection speeds are not sufficiently fast, and this is being taken up with the telecom company.
- A project aiming to capture customer profiling of council tenants has commenced. Work has been carried out on designing a questionnaire a process for keeping information regularly updated. Completion was due by June 2008 however a number of I.T. issues need to be addressed and the target date for despatch of the questionnaires is now autumn 2008.

Staff and Management

- Work has begun on planning housing staff conferences, which will take place over 3 days in October 2008.
- All senior managers in Housing are involved in the IDEA Future Leadership training with a view to developing a joint learning and development programme once everyone has been through the training. To date 3 Service & Group Managers in housing have completed the course, a further 5 are part way through the course and 3 managers are booked to start the course later this year.

Estate Management

- A revised process for Estate Improvement Grants has been developed, details of this are in a report elsewhere on this agenda.
- Housing have contributed to a multi agency project focussing on the Westfield area which has been highlighted as an area with high indices of multiple deprivation. In particular we are focussing on income maximisation and dealing with debt.

Homelessness & Access to Housing

- The new **Peasholme Centre** building at Fishergate is due for completion in January 2009, and a multi agency plan is being developed for the Resettlement Service.
- A partnership has been established to develop a **choice based lettings scheme (CBL)** for the North Yorkshire sub-region. Recruitment for a Project Manager is underway, once the partners have examined the options for how this might work in practice a report will be brought to EMAP with recommendations for the way forward.
- Implement systems for monitoring outcomes of **nominations to RSLs (Registered Social Landlords)** in order to maximise level of need met through nominations have been implemented and are being monitored on a quarterly basis both by the RSL landlord group, and at individual meetings with RSLs. The implications of Choice Based Lettings will need to be considered as the project progresses.

Emerging Issues

Integration of housing customer contact into the easy@york programme was originally timetabled to commence in August 2008. The programme timetable has now changed and preparatory work will not commence until 2009.

Areas for Improvement

There has been delay in the development and delivery of customer panels in housing due to delays in the recruitment process for a Panel Co-ordinator – a revised project plan is in place with work commencing in detail in October 2008.

Progress has been made against some actions towards meeting the governments 'RESPECT' standard for housing management, including reviewing estate walkabouts and the joint work with RSL landlords referred to above, however actions relating to improving multi agency working at a corporate level have not progressed.

Work on consultation with leaseholders about revisions to the service charging process has been delayed and the original dates will be subject to revision.

Financial Summary

The table below sets out the variations in accordance with the financial regulations.

	Approved Budget £'000	Projected Variation £'000	Variation %
Repairs and Maintenance			
Jobs General - main areas of overspend are plumbing and roofing	4,853	+352	+7.25
Projects – repair costs for “high performance” windows higher than expected	904	+24	+2.65
General Management			
Housing Operations – savings mainly due to lower than forecast payments for the golden goodbye scheme	2,534	-10	-0.39
Asset Management- mainly due to staff vacancies	527	-55	-10.44
Sheltered Housing – underspends on staffing and equipment offset by increased expenditure on utilities	742	-29	-3.91
Temporary Accommodation – mainly due to staff vacancy	663	-28	-4.22
Discus Bungalows – expenditure on discus project to be reimbursed from sale receipt	48	+76	+158.33
Caretaking – saving due to vacancy	229	-18	-7.86
Provision for Bad Debt – lower than forecast provision for rents bad debt, mainly for current tenant arrears.	96	-30	-31.25

	Approved Budget £'000	Projected Variation £'000	Variation %
Housing Subsidy Payment – increase in subsidy receivable due to higher than forecast interest rate	5,349	-12	-0.22
- partly offset by increase in loan interest payable	1,171	+9	+0.77
Dwelling Rents	-25,032	-67	-0.27
Reduction in forecast RTB sales and lower than estimated void loss			
Non – dwelling rents	-554	-29	-5.23
Lower than forecast void rates for shops and garages			
Fees and Charges			
Cooker rental – lower number of cookers rented than forecast	-98	+19	+19.39
Supporting People – reduction in income lower than forecast	-869	-31	-3.57
Internal Interest – mainly due to higher than forecast working balance	-300	-200	-66.67
Recharges – forecast underspends in areas within HASS result in a reduction in the amount charged to the HRA.	1,295	-20	-1.54
Other Minor Variations	1,011	-2	-0.20
Net change in working balance	-7,431	-51	-0.69

Performance Measures

Customer Measures			
Description	2007/8 Outturn	2008/9	
		Annual Target	Current Performance
Urgent repairs completed within government time limits	90%	99%	91.9%
Average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs	7.97 days	8 days	6.96 days
Repairs partnership end to end measure	New	Measure in development	Measure in development
Local Authority Tenant satisfaction with opportunities for participation	64%	78%	Annual
% of external calls answered in 20 seconds (Housing Services)	96%	97%	96.15%

Process Measures			
Description	2007/8 Outturn	2008/9	
		Annual Target	Current Performance
Average relet times for Local Authority Dwellings	19.37 days	18 days	17.5 days
% Planned services of council dwellings with gas fittings which have been completed	New	100% (Quarter 1 target 95%)	68%
% Of minor council adaptations completed within 20 days (target subject to change to reflect new NIs)	77.6%	85%	Not available
% Of major council adaptations completed within 60 days* (target subject to change to reflect new NIs)	25.9%	50%	Not available

Resource Measures			
Description	2007/8 Outturn	2008/9	
		Annual Target	Current Performance
Percentage of rent collected	97.9%	98.2% (Quarter 1 target 88%)	88.1%
Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll	2.27%	1.92% (Quarter 1 target 2.77%)	2.74%
Rent lost through voids (all properties)	1.07%	1.09% (Quarter 1 target 0.27%)	0.27%
Rent lost through voids (excluding discus bungalows awaiting demolition)	0.6%	0.5% (Quarter 1 target 0.12%)	0.12%
Repairs partnership under/overspend	New	On budget	£352,000 (Projected at year end)