

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 two targets for both rent collection and rent arrears have been achieved (see table Resource measures) below.
- Work against the Audit Commission's 'Key Lines of Enquiry' for Income Management has been postponed due to re-prioritisation of work across the Service Development Team. This will be re-considered during December/ January

▪ 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 methodology to monitor the impact of the new void process is currently being developed to be introduced during by end of 2008. 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 'new homes questionnaire' sent to all council tenants when they move into a new home and due to be re launched early 2009, .
- Rent loss from void properties at the end of the second quarter was slightly above the target of 0.55% at 0.61%.

▪ Responsive repairs

- Following an end-to- end review of the service, a Pilot for changes emerging from the review commenced on September 3rd and is being closely monitored and managed by officers.
- Consultation events on the outcomes of the review will take place during November/December, with a report to EMAP in January on recommendations for future service levels to customers

▪ Tackling Anti Social Behaviour

- A new IT module has been developed to enable improved recording and monitoring of anti-social behaviour and nuisance issues. Staff members have been trained on this system and it is due to go live during November 2008.
- Discussions are ongoing 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. Proposals exist for landlords to purchase services from the CYC housing Tenancy Enforcement Team, with the aims of reducing anti-social behaviour and ensuring a greater consistency of approach on multi-tenure estates.

3. Consolidate our approach to customer services

- The Housing Quality Network has recently undertaken a Mystery Shopping exercise with a number of Housing Organisations across York, including CYC. The findings of this research have been considered by HSMT and improvement actions agreed to address the issues raised.
- The Strategy and Enabling Group are developing a business case, in partnership with the Neighbourhood Management Unit, to further develop a strategic approach to customer engagement activity, including a review of current activities.
- The Customer Panel Co-ordinator is now in post and a project plan is in place to deliver agreed priorities for focussed customer engagement work. This post links to the work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Management Unit on behalf of Housing Services and plans are being developed to develop a strategic framework in which to drive the engagement agenda forward
- A staff group has been set up to monitor and further develop the customer and colleague standards and amendments have been made to ensure these are relevant to all areas of Housing Services. Work is taking place to ensure that these standards are embedded across the service, including being central to staff inductions.

Other Achievements

Service Improvements

- Following issues during the piloting of mobile working using mini-laptop computers in partnership with easy@york the department is looking at a solution using Kirona software (specialists in mobile technology) the aim is to have a pilot on income management and reactive repairs in place by the end of the financial year.

- It is anticipated that the programme of customer profiling of council tenants will commence during early 2009 and run throughout at least the first two quarters of 2009/10 in order to manage the workload arising as a result of the returns.

Staff and Management

- During October Housing Services staff attended a second annual staff seminar. The seminars were held over three half days and were designed to build on the success of the first seminars held in 2007. The key focus of these seminars was to engage staff in considering future priorities and direction for Housing Services and starting to assess the position of Housing Services in readiness for a move towards more flexible working, linked to the corporate accommodation project. Overall staff responded enthusiastically to the seminars and the priority for the Housing Services Management Team (HSMT) now is to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform future priorities and planning. HSMT is committed to ensuring that this valuable information is used in future and feeds into the next Annual Staff Seminar to take place in Autumn 2009.
- All senior managers in Housing have either completed, are part way through or are enrolled on the IDEA Future Leadership training. Initial feedback from staff is that this course has provided a positive learning experience.

Estate Management

- Changes to the Estate Improvement Grants have been agreed and implementation will take effect in April.

Homelessness & Access to Housing

- The new **Peasholme Centre** building at Fishergate has been delayed because the contractor became insolvent. The work has been re tendered and it is anticipated work should re-commence during November with completion likely during July 2009.
- Work towards developing a sub regional **Choice based lettings scheme (CBL)** for the North Yorkshire sub-region continues, with a number of new partners coming onboard. Recruitment for a Project Manager is underway with interviews to be held at the end of November and this remains a priority to drive the project forward.
- Following implementation of a system to monitor **nominations to RSLs (Registered Social Landlords)**, in order to maximise level of need met through nominations, continues by the RSL landlord group, and at individual meetings with RSLs. The results of this monitoring will be analysed at the end of 2008/9 and into 2009/10

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 late 2009.

Areas for Improvement

Progress continues to be made across Housing Services in delivering actions towards meeting the governments 'RESPECT' standard for housing management, however progress in delivering actions relating to improving multi agency working at a corporate level have not progressed

Consultation with leaseholders about revisions to the service charging process have been delayed due to a process of re- prioritisation of customer engagement work.

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	+350	+7.21
Projects – repair costs for “high performance” windows higher than expected	904	+20	+2.21
Estate Improvement Grant – underspend due to lower than forecast take-up	248	-15	-6.05
General Management			
Property Services charge – lower charge mainly due to the reduction in RTB work	183	-60	-32.79
Housing Operations – savings mainly due to staff vacancies, reduction in legal fees and lower than forecast payments for the golden goodbye scheme	2,534	-96	-3.79
Asset Management- mainly due to staff vacancies	559	-52	-9.30

Annex 1

	Approved Budget £'000	Projected Variation £'000	Variation %
Sheltered Housing – under spends on staffing and equipment partly offset by increased expenditure on utilities	742	-18	-2.43
Energy Costs – higher than forecast utility costs	56	+33	+58.93
Peasholme Hostel – savings on staffing following a reduction in the use of relief staff	435	-13	-2.99
Grounds Maintenance – savings on gardening and day to day maintenance	366	-40	-10.93
Caretaking – saving due to vacancy	229	-24	-10.48
Provision for Bad Debt – lower than forecast provision for rents bad debt, mainly for current tenant arrears.	96	-30	-31.25
Housing Subsidy Payment – decrease in subsidy receivable due to lower than forecast interest rate	5,349	+8	+0.15
- partly offset by decrease in loan interest payable	1,171	-13	-1.11
Debt Management Expenses – reduction in charge due to change in allocation method	22	-18	-81.82
Dwelling Rents – mainly due to the reduction in forecast RTB sales	-25,032	-57	-0.23
Non – dwelling rents	-554	-42	-7.58
Lower than forecast void rates for shops and garages			
Fees and Charges			
Legal fees – reduced income(offset by reduced expenditure, see general	-84	+20	+23.81

	Approved Budget £'000	Projected Variation £'000	Variation %
management above)			
Cooker rental – lower number of cookers rented than forecast	-98	+30	+30.61
Supporting People – reduction in income lower than forecast	-869	-25	-2.88
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(-£75k). This is offset by a reduction recharged to capital receipts(+£33k)	1,295	-42	-3.24
Other Minor Variations	633	-1	-0.16
Net change in working balance	-7,262	-285	-3.92

Performance Measures

Customer Measures			
Description	2007/8 Outturn	2008/9	
		Annual Target	Current Performance
Urgent repairs completed within government time limits	90%	99%	96.2%
Average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs	7.97 days	8 days	7.18 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) from GF report	96%	97%	96.4%

Process Measures			
Description	2007/8 Outturn	2008/9	
		Annual Target	Current Performance
Average relet times for Local Authority Dwellings	19.37 days	18 days	19.60 days
% Planned services of council dwellings with gas fittings which have been completed	New	100% (Quarter 1 target 95%)	87.1%
% Of minor council adaptations completed within 20 days (target subject to change to reflect new NIs)	77.6%	85%	85.80%
% Of major council adaptations completed within 60 days* (target subject to change to reflect new NIs)	25.9%	50%	50%

Resource Measures			
Description	2007/8 Outturn	2008/9	
		Annual Target	Current Performance
Percentage of rent collected	97.9%	98.2% (Quarter 2 target 93.4%)	93.96%
Rent arrears as a proportion of the rent roll	2.27%	1.92% (Quarter 2 target 3.27%)	3.2%
Rent lost through voids (all properties)	1.07%	1.09% (Quarter 2 target 0.55%)	0.61%
Rent lost through voids (excluding discus bungalows awaiting demolition)	0.6%	0.5% (Quarter 2 target 0.24%)	0.31%
Repairs partnership under/overspend	New	On budget	£350,000 over (Projected at year end)