

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	20 November 2014
Subject: Housing Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information

Summary

- This six monthly update on Housing Service performance and management information, keeps Members up to date with progress against key areas of work. The report covers performance for the first half of the financial year – 1 April to 30 September 2014.
- Members may wish to note that:
 - Performance on responsive repairs has generally met or exceeded targets;
 - Performance on the percentage of properties with gas safety certificates has improved since last year;
 - Performance on rent collection is slightly below target but continues to remain high and is better than the same period last year despite the impact of welfare benefit reforms;
 - We continue to see a large number of Right to Buy applications and completions since the Government introduced larger discounts and new eligibility criteria;
 - There has been a significant reduction in the number of people on our waiting list;
 - Performance on benefit claims has exceeded targets in two of the three performance indicators.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. This report will be presented to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee every six months. It provides Members with an overview of Housing

Service performance and progress on key issues, plus some additional information of interest.

- This report covers the period 1 April to 30 September 2014. It has been organised to give Members information on each of 6 areas of work:

- Repairs & Maintenance
- Estate Management, Resident Involvement & Revenues
- Allocations
- Affordable Housing & Major Projects
- Benefits
- Finance

Repairs & Maintenance

- Performance information on our responsive repairs service is collected and reported quarterly. Indicators are reviewed annually to ensure they produce meaningful data that can be monitored effectively. Some of the indicators for 2014/15 have been combined. The service is delivered by our contractor, Wates Living Space (formerly Linbrook).

Performance indicator	Target	Mid-year performance
'Immediate' repairs (complete within 2 hours)	100%	100%
'Emergency' repairs (complete within 24 hours)	95%	95%
'Routine' repairs	95%	96%
% of jobs for which post-work inspections were carried out	15%	10%

- Gas servicing is done by our contractor, Carillion, who work closely with City staff to gain access to properties and carry out the necessary checks. 99% of our properties now have up to date CP12 gas safety certificates. Our target is 100%, but the performance so far this year is a significant improvement on the 2013/14 year end figure of 96.6%.

Estate Management, Resident Involvement and Revenues

- Satisfaction with estate services (cleaning, appearance of the estate and customer service) is measured annually and will be included in this report in May 2015.

Performance on other relevant indicators is below:

Performance indicator	Target	Mid-year performance
% Rent collected	98.5%	98.32%

6. There were 31 incidents of anti-social behaviour on our estates during the six months. Most of these were minor issues which would not be classed as anti-social behaviour by the police. We are currently developing a new anti-social behaviour policy to reflect changes in legislation and to ensure we are dealing with and reporting anti-social behaviour consistently and according to good practice guidelines. More details will be brought to Members at the next meeting.
7. The Residents Engagement & Consultation Strategy was published on the City of London website in order for residents to provide comments and feedback. This feedback will be incorporated where possible and any major changes will be brought back to the Sub-Committee for approval.
8. Residents Celebration Day took place on 18 October 2014 and was a fun and interesting event. A speaker from The Royal British Legion joined residents and staff on the day. There was also some vintage musical entertainment from The Haywood Sisters, information stalls and several workshops, including the launch of the Housing User Board (HUB) and the introduction of the new 'Home' Standard by Property Services.
9. A new Complaints Policy has been drafted and was circulated to the new Housing User Board at Residents Celebration Day for their comments. The new policy has an accompanying leaflet for residents detailing how to make a complaint.
10. Poppy Project - Community Development Training has been delivered across all 11 Housing Estates. Programme of events for the 'Remembering Yesterday, Celebrating Today' project was planned and delivered. Activities have been resident led and included commemorative fun days, poppy planting, a visit to the Poppy Factory, fundraising, baking and a tea dance.
11. 140 residents from across 5 City of London Estates joined each other for a day out to Brighton in July. Ages ranged from 3 months to 84 years and many children had never seen the sea before. Most residents paid for the trip with Time Credits, meaning 609 volunteering hours went into making the trip a success.
12. 19 Right to Buy applications were made during the 6 month period. None of these particular applications resulted in sales. However, 7 applications received prior to the period completed during the last six months. The figures during the first half year show a reduction compared to the same period last year when a total of 45 Right to Buy applications were received for the whole year. However, the number of sales is comparable as 14 applications completed.
13. Residents' Open Meetings are now well established and continue to be held on all the estates. Members will recall the purpose of the meetings is to ensure greater transparency, wider communication and engagement with all our residents. The general feedback from meetings continues to be very positive.

Allocations

14. The number of people currently on our waiting list is 684. This figure is significantly lower than last year. The number of households on the Housing Register has reduced due to the impact of the Allocations Policy which was developed in line with the Localism Act 2011. Applicants who no longer have a connection to the City through residence or employment are no longer eligible to be on the Housing Register.
15. There have been 54 vacancies during the last six months. The average time taken to relet a property from the day the keys are handed back to the day they are given to a new tenant during this period was 28 days. This figure has unfortunately increased during the last six months mainly as a result of several properties needing more extensive repairs. The target is 24 days.

Affordable Housing and Major Projects

16. Members will already be aware that there are a number of schemes being developed in a number of areas. If all of the opportunities are realised there will be in excess of 210 affordable housing units constructed in the next 2-3 years.
17. One such scheme is Horace Jones House which is currently scheduled for handover in Jan 2015 when we expect the first residents to move in. The rent charged for each dwelling will be based on Social Rent levels however the precise amounts are yet to be determined. The methodology for calculating service charges has now been finalised.
18. We are also looking at a number of in-fill development opportunities across our estates and a more detailed report will be brought to Committee in due course. However, the highlight in this area of work within the last 6 months is the pre-planning application submitted to the London Borough of Islington in October to develop 3, three bedroom dwellings at Isleden House.

Major projects

19. The 30 Year Asset Management Plan is currently being finalised. A detailed 5 year plan has been produced and this has been presented to the various Residents' open meetings mentioned in paragraph 12. Notable inclusions are major window replacements, kitchen and bathroom replacements, lift refurbishments and door entry replacements.

Benefits

20. There are currently 1069 households in the City and on our housing estates claiming benefits. Performance on our indicators is as follows:

Performance indicator	Target	Mid-year performance
Average time taken to process new benefit claims	28 days	19 days

% New claims decided within 14 days	90%	97%
Average number of days taken to process notification of changes of circumstance	10 days	11.5 days

Finance

21. Also within this agenda is a report on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Budgets 2015/16. This sets out the latest approved budget for 2014/15 and the original budget for 2015/16. This will inform members of the HRA's latest financial position.

HouseMark - Local Authority Benchmarking Report

22. In September we received the HouseMark Local Authority Benchmarking Report. The report provided an analysis of our cost and performance for a number of social housing activities, eg cost per property of responsive repairs, compared to a number of other similar housing providers for the 2012/13 financial year.

23. Whilst we continue to provide a housing service that is high in performance, we remain expensive compared to our particular peer group. However, it is worth mentioning some key business activity KPI improvements detailed in the report:

- The total cost per property of responsive repairs and voids work is now in the Upper Quartile, previously the Median Quartile
- The direct cost per property of lettings is now in the Upper Quartile, previously the Median Quartile
- The average relet time for 'standard' relets is now in the Upper Quartile, previously the Median Quartile
- The total cost per property of all Housing Management has reduced from £589 (2011/12) to £516
- The total cost per property of direct Housing Management has reduced from £430 (2011/12) to £365.

Appendices

None

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