

Committee	Dated:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	25/04/2016
Subject: Housing Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Bob Jacks, Head of Estates Housing & Neighbourhoods Division	

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 second half of the financial year (October 2015 to March 2016).

Members may wish to note that:

- Performance on responsive repairs has exceeded targets in all performance indicators;
- Performance on rent collection has exceeded the target despite the impact of welfare benefit reforms;
- Performance on benefit claims has exceeded targets in all three performance indicators;
- A Time Credit Celebration Event was held in St Ethelburga's Church in February to celebrate 4 years of the scheme operating in the City of London;
- Only one of the 26 complaints received escalated to the Ombudsman.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. This report is 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.
2. This report covers the period October 2015 to March 2016. It has been organised to give Members information on each of eight areas of work:

- Repairs & Maintenance
- Estate Management
- Resident Engagement
- Revenues
- Allocations
- Affordable Housing
- Benefits
- Complaints

Repairs & Maintenance

3. 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. The service is delivered by our contractor, Wates Living Space.

Performance indicator	Target	Year-end performance
Overall	96%	98%
Priority One repairs (complete within 24 hours)	95%	98%
Priority Two repairs (complete within 3 working days)	95%	97%
Priority Three repairs (complete within 5 working days)	93%	99%
Priority Four (complete within 20 working days)	96%	99%
% of jobs for which post-work inspections were carried out	15%	22%

4. 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. At the end of this reporting period, 99.32% of our properties have up to date CP12 gas safety certificates; only 11 properties remain outstanding. Our target remains 100%.

Estate Management

5. 13 Right to Buy applications were made between October 2015 and March 2016. None of these completed during the reporting period. However, four applications received prior to October completed during this time. These 4 completions represent approximately 0.2% of the remaining social rented stock.
6. There were 32 new incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour on our estates during the past six months. These can be broken down as follows:

Avondale Square	9	Windsor House	3
Golden Lane	2	Sydenham Hill	1
Southbank	7	Middlesex Street	8
Isleden House	1	Dron House	1

7. Most of these were minor issues which would not be classed as anti-social behaviour by the police. We have a new Anti-Social Behaviour policy which has been approved by the Sub-Committee and we are currently developing a suite of staff procedures to underpin this.
8. The Neighbourhood Patrol Service, being run as a pilot in partnership with the Community Safety Team, City Police and Parkguard, is proving popular and successful so far. Feedback from residents has been positive and the daily reports have highlighted issues which we have been able to address speedily. The service has now been extended to include Dron House and Windsor House where feedback has been equally positive.

Resident Engagement

9. The 'Remembering Yesterday, Celebrating Today' programme of events has continued across City of London Estates. The key highlight was staff and residents working together to sell poppies at Barbican Station for the British Royal Legion. Staff and residents collected during 'London Poppy Week' to raise an impressive £6,000, which is almost triple the amount raised last year. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk joined the housing team's efforts.
10. This year's Lord Mayor's Show was celebrated with the Portsoken Community having their very own float in the parade. It was a real community effort which saw 11 separate groups join forces at workshops to make arches which represented the area. Groups like Sir John Cass school, local gardening and women's groups as well as the congregation of St Botolph's Church put together a wonderful spectacle based around the theme of Portsoken 'Past, Present and Future'. It was a wonderful day, despite the rain. Some of those involved have gone on to join the steering committee of the City Play East, to be held in 2017.
11. Residents continue to give much of their time to support community engagement on their estates. In this period 1346 hours of time was given by individuals earning Time Credits on their estates. Ways in which time was given include consultation through the Housing Users Board, design sessions for the Portsoken Lord Mayor's Float and supporting the City to shape services and organising a wide range of events. These have included gardening, tea dances, information evenings, craft activities, Halloween parties, Christmas lunches and a pancake day / mardi gras event, to name a few.
12. A Time Credit Celebration Event was held in St Ethelburga's Church in February to celebrate 4 years of the scheme operating in the City of London. This was very well attended by groups and individuals, with over 100 people turning out. The event was co-chaired by a tenant within the City of London, who has made a huge impact volunteering on her estate and donating her Time Credits to carers and families for them to be able to spend on days out.

Revenues

13. Our team of Income Recovery Officers, Rent Officers and Estate Managers continue to work tirelessly to maintain the HRA rent collection rate at the level

previously achieved despite the introduction, in some areas, of Universal Credit. Our team has surpassed expectations this year by returning a HRA rent collection rate during 2015/16 of 98.8%, exceeding the already stretching target of 98.6%.

14. By continuing to use a range of communication measures including letters, emails, texts, personal visits etc the estate management team were able to apply prompt, remedial action whenever arrears accrued on accounts resolving many issues swiftly. Given the ongoing financial climate an achievement of this nature should not be underestimated.

Allocations

15. There are currently 815 people on the Housing Waiting List. The updated Housing Allocations Policy as agreed by the Community & Children's Services Committee comes into effect on 1 April 2016.
16. The Housing Needs Team is in receipt of approximately 60 applications per month not all of which are eligible for the Housing Register. Due to the decant of Mais House, the waiting list for sheltered housing is currently suspended and the Housing Needs Team are no longer sending out applications to applicants.
17. At 31 March 2016 there were 6 vacant properties. Over the six month period there have been 38 voids. The average time taken to re-let a property was 25 days. The target is 24 days. Over the last 12 months there have been 146 voids with the average time to re-let a property being a fraction over 19 days.

Affordable Housing

18. The City of London's policy objective to deliver 3700 new homes over the next 10 years to help fight the chronic shortage has been approved by the Policy and Resources Committee and endorsed by the Grand Committee. It is envisaged that 3000 of these properties will be built on surplus land holdings and their project delivery will be managed by the City Surveyor. 700+ homes will be provided on existing HRA land over the next 10 years.
19. A report on the delivery of this programme will be considered by Grand Committee which will include the development and implementation of a communication and engagement strategy with residents and exploration of delivery options
20. Construction commenced in January 2015 at Avondale Square Estate and we are scheduled to complete 18 new homes in June 2016 (4 one bed, 5 two bed, 5 three bed and 4 four bed) on the site of the former Avondale Community Centre/estate office. This will also include new community facilities for residents and a new estate office. This is scheduled to complete in June 2016.
21. A new three bedroom wheelchair adapted dwelling and community space at Dron House was delivered in January 2016.

22. Planning applications have been submitted for 3 three bed units and a new community space at Isleden House and for the redevelopment of the Islington Arts Factory, Holloway Estate, to provide 32 additional units.

23. We are also working closely with London Borough of Islington to provide a new, two form entry, primary school and nursery and up to 70 homes on the Richard Cloudesley site, Golden Lane, which now has a target completion date of September 2018.

Benefits

24. There are currently 983 households in the City and on our housing estates claiming benefits. Performance on our indicators is as follows:

Performance indicator	Target	Year-end performance
Average time taken to process new benefit claims	<26 days	21 days
% New claims decided within 14 days	>90%	97%
Average number of days taken to process notification of changes of circumstance	10 days	8 days

Complaints

25. We received a total of 26 formal complaints during the reporting period. The broad subject areas of the complaints received can be broken down as follows:

	Number received in reporting period
Responsive repairs	7
Parking	2
Service charge/rent (including Benefits)	4
Customer Service	5
Estate management	8

26. Of the 26 complaints received, 22 were addressed at Stage 1 within the agreed ten working day deadline, 13 of which were not upheld, four partially upheld and five were upheld. Three of these complaints were escalated to Stage 2 and have subsequently not been upheld.

27. One complaint then went on to be escalated to Stage 3. This related to:

- Housing application and request for additional points, for which the applicants was not eligible. The complaint was not upheld.

28. The above complaint was escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman/ Housing Ombudsman. We are awaiting the outcome of the Ombudsman investigation.

Appendices

- None

Robert Jacks
Head of Estates

T: 020 7332 1916

E: robert.jacks@cityoflondon.gov.uk