

Committee	Dated:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	28 November 2016
Subject: Housing Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Robert Jacks – Head of Estates	

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 2016 to 30 September 2016).

Members may wish to note that:

- Performance on responsive repairs and maintenance has generally met or exceeded targets, other than for CP12 gas safety certificates;
- Performance on rent collection is just below target but continues to remain very high;
- Performance on benefit claims has exceeded targets in all three performance indicators.
- Two families have been successfully resettled within the City under the Syrian Refugee resettlement programme

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 1 April 2016 to 30 September 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

- 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	Mid-year performance
Overall	96%	98.05%
Priority One repairs (complete within 24 hours)	95%	96.90%
Priority Two repairs (complete within 3 working days)	95%	98.81%
Priority Three repairs (complete within 5 working days)	96%	97.80%
Priority Four repairs (complete within 20 working days)	96%	99.40%
% of jobs for which post-work inspections were carried out	15%	26%

- Gas servicing is carried by our contractor, Carillion, who work closely with City staff to gain access to properties and carry out the necessary safety checks. At the end of this reporting period, 99.07% of our properties have up to date CP12 gas safety certificates; only 15 properties remain outstanding. Our target remains 100%.

Estate Management

- 23 Right to Buy applications were made between 1 April and 30 September 2016. None of these completed during the reporting period. However, five applications received prior to 1 April 2016 completed during this time. Five completions represent approximately 0.25% of the remaining social housing stock.
- There were 29 new incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour on our estates during the past six months. Most of these were minor issues which would not be classed as anti-social behaviour by the police. These can be broken down as follows:

Avondale Square	10
Golden Lane	4
Southbank	11
Isleden House	1
Sydenham Hill	1
Middlesex Street	2

- Members will be aware that, earlier in the year, we consulted residents about the Neighbourhood Patrol Service provided by Parkguard, and whether they wished it to continue. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and the majority of residents were in favour of continuing the service, saying it was a benefit to their

estate and provided valuable reassurance. Feedback from the City Police, Homelessness Team, Community Safety Team and our own Housing staff was also very good.

8. As a result, the City has contracted Parkguard to provide the service for a further two years, commencing 1 September 2016, so residents will continue to see patrol officers on their estate regularly.

Resident Engagement

9. Residents continue to actively support their communities in a variety of ways, as volunteers, to make a real difference on their estates. In this period 837 hours of time was given by individuals, earning Time Credits which were spent in some cases on group trips or activities for children and older residents. Time was freely given to help with consultation engagement, fun activities and seasonal one – off events to encourage people to spend time together. Time was also given to on-going regular activities such as gardening, or towards being part of the ‘neighbour network’ scheme. In addition, a trip to Kew Gardens, paid for by Time Credits, was enjoyed by over 40 residents from a number of different estates.
10. A considerable amount of community funding has been awarded to residents’ groups, including the Tesco’s Cash for Bags scheme. The wide range of activities and resources enabled through funding grants included Easter egg hunts, a Graffiti Project, the Queen’s 90th Birthday celebrations and grounds maintenance improvements on some estates. Golden Lane Estate was awarded an amazing sum of £8000 by Tesco so the ‘Golden Baggers’ were able to refurbish and revamp the allotment area to be more ‘disability friendly’ with wider aisles, level access troughs and much needed additional planting space.
11. To mark the Queen’s 90th Birthday, the City hosted and lit a birthday beacon on the Golden Lane Estate. This was one of 900 beacons lit around the country to commemorate the event. The beacon was lit by the Chief Commoner, Michael Welbank MBE, and assisted by residents Joan Flannery and Karen Johnson. Almost 100 people attended the event.
12. A comprehensive Community Toolkit with templates and handy hints and tips has been created to provide officers and residents with the necessary information and guidance to help arrange a community event or activity.

Revenues

13. Our team of Income Recovery Officers and Estate Managers continue to work tirelessly to maintain the HRA rent collection rate at the level previously achieved. Historically, there is a slight reduction in performance at this time of year, and this year is no exception. Despite this, the mid-year collection rate of 98.4% still remains exceptionally high.
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 898 people on the Housing Waiting List.
16. The Housing Needs Team is in receipt of approximately 60 applications per month not all of which are eligible for the Housing Register. The decant of residents from Mais House continues with all residents on the Housing Register with highest priority for rehousing.
17. At 30 September 2016 there were 3 vacant properties. Over the last six months there have been 36 voids with the average time to re-let a property being 26.5 days. The target is 24 days. For sheltered housing there have been 3 voids with an average turnaround of 79 days.
18. Members will recall a number of dwellings were set aside previously to offer as homes to families of Syrian refugees as part of the pan-London approach to the crisis. I am very pleased to say that since the last report the City of London has successfully resettled two families under the Syrian Refugee resettlement programme. Both have been housed within the City. With close co-operation of Estate staff on both Golden Lane and Middlesex Street, Adult and Children's Services, the Housing Needs Team and Refugee Action, which is providing the post resettlement support, both families settled smoothly into their new homes and are now able to rebuild their lives in a safe and secure environment.
19. The Housing Needs Team are now awaiting the handover of the Twelve Acres House flats on the Avondale Square Estate, 12 of which are for the City of London and 6 for London Borough of Southwark applicants.

Affordable Housing

20. Members will be aware that several schemes are being developed in a number of areas. If all of the opportunities are realised there will be in excess of 200 new affordable housing units constructed in the next 2-3 years.
21. Construction of 18 new homes (4 one bed, 5 two bed, 5 three bed and 4 four bed) on the site of the former Avondale Community Centre/estate office is almost complete. This also includes new community facilities for residents and a new estate office. This new development has been named Twelve Acres House in recognition of the historic name of the area now covered by the Avondale Square Estate.
22. The Grand Committee is expected to consider at its meeting in November two other potential projects:
 - a) the development of 13 flats at George Ellison & Eric Wilkins Houses and,
 - b) the development of a three, 3 bedroom flats at Isleden House.

23. A revised Planning Application has been submitted for the redevelopment of the Islington Arts Factory, Holloway Estate, to provide 26 additional units.(19 for social rent, 7 for private sale)

24. We also continue to work 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 has a target completion date of September 2019.

25. In addition, a full detailed report on how to provide 700 new homes over next 10 years will be presented to Members early next year following our consultant's report from BNP Paribas. This will concentrate on our estates in Southwark and Islington where the best opportunities are present.

Benefits

26. There are currently 891 households in the City and on our other 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	<26 days	17 days
% New claims decided within 14 days	>90%	99%
Average number of days taken to process notification of changes of circumstance	<10 days	6 days

Complaints

27. We received a total of 40 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	17
Parking	0
Service charge/rent	2
Customer Service	6
Estate management	15

28. Of the 40 complaints received, 36 were addressed at Stage 1 within the agreed ten working day deadline. A total of three of these complaints were addressed at Stage 2.

29. One complaint was escalated and addressed at Stage 3. This related to a dispute regarding an Insurance query. The complainant escalated the complaint to Stage 3 as the complainant was not satisfied with the outcomes of the Stage 1 & 2 investigations.

30. No complaints were escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.

31. Of those complaints either fully or partially upheld a number of actions were taken and processes implemented. These included the reimbursement of costs incurred by the complainant for the loss or damage of goods, increased patrols by Parkguard, additional training for staff and revisions to our Estate Management procedures.

Appendices

- None

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