

Housing & Property Services Portfolio Update – February 2014

Cllr Norman Vincett 30 January 2014

What have the measures in the Portfolio Holder Statement been telling you about how things are going in service during 2013/14?

Income collection is currently stronger than it was before the welfare reforms were implemented with bad debt provision remaining consistently low. As at the end of December 2013 the collection rate stood at 101%. Since the start of the financial year when the under occupation charge was implemented, rent arrears have reduced from £916,571 to £856,121 - against the national trend which is generally seeing rent arrears increase. We have also been monitoring closely those tenants affected by the under occupation charge and 75% of tenants who are affected are maintaining payments. Strong performance in this area continues to benefit the Housing Business Plan through the collection of income above the assumed rate.

The *Housing Business Plan* has been thoroughly reviewed to ensure that the assumptions underpinning it reflect the current position in order that performance against the Plan can be effectively monitored. Strong performance against a number of significant areas has enabled the service to revise its assumptions and despite a number of external factors outside of the Council's control which have negatively impacted upon the plan, it is still able to project a significantly improved position with increased surpluses and the potential to build new homes.

Health and Safety compliance has been very strong with performance on *gas safety inspections* remaining consistently above 99% for the financial year to date. In addition, *customer feedback* shows extremely high satisfaction levels for repairs and maintenance, with 87% of customers either very satisfied or satisfied when asked after a visit by a contractor.

Whilst the service is continuing to deliver high levels of performance in a number of areas, the *Tier 2 service redesign* continues to be developed in order to improve and maintain service delivery. This will be key in turning the curve on performance, managing business risk and ensuring the development/compliance against robust systems and procedures.

Lifeline Warwick Response continues to be recognised as achieving Platinum Status by the Telecare Services Association following a three yearly audit and we are now introducing a new service M-Care whereby customers can use their own mobile phone instead of a fixed land line and can receive services wherever they are.

There have been 80 *affordable housing units* delivered in 2013, with at least a further 250 being delivered in 2014.

Which measures have been of particular interest or concern during the period and what have you learnt about your systems from these measures? Please attach the final version of your SAP customer & operational measures for the year.

Following an increase of *void rent loss* at the start of the financial year, performance is continuing to improve and remains within the assumed levels within the business plan.

The *Asset Management measures* have been difficult to report on due to the changes in contracts and the way in which systems are now being used. This requires some investment in time to ensure that the measures that we are reporting are the right ones and that the data is available in order to understand performance.

The *service redesign* has provided an opportunity to review and look into systems and processes to develop new, more efficient and effective ways of working. However, as the redesign has been delayed for the second time, this causes additional uncertainty and insecurity for staff as well as delaying the benefits being borne out in service delivery.

The *services risk register* has undergone a thorough review to ensure that all risks are identified and appropriately mitigated. A *comprehensive action plan* has been included in the risk register to ensure that risk is managed effectively.

What have you done to date as a result of learning from these measures?

We continue to improve our use data to inform us of how efficient we are at managing void properties so that they are relet as quickly as possible. We are reviewing the data captured within the systems and using that to assist us on focusing on the areas that require improvements.

The service redesign remains a priority and this is being progressed as quickly and effectively as is practical. The Business Support Team and Sustaining Tenancies Team will progress their redesigns imminently. We are in the process of recruiting an Asset Manager and once appointed, will then progress the service redesign in that area. Additional temporary resources have been agreed in the Asset Management Team to ensure that short term service delivery is maintained while the longer term service proposals are being developed and implemented.

Continued

A 12 month pilot partnership has been established between Warwick and Stratford District Councils and the County Council Occupational Therapy Service to provide a joined up service for residents of all tenures who require help and assistance to live independently at home. The service is for owner occupiers and tenants within the boundaries of Warwick and Stratford District Councils and tenants of Housing Associations. This will streamline services for customers who require an adaptation, regardless of their tenure type, and deliver efficiencies through the centralisation of services.

What has been the impact of what you have done to date and what else do you plan to do as a result of learning from these measures?

The void rent loss is reducing and we are continuing to look at ways in which we can further improve.

The *recruitment* for additional/replacement resources will shortly be underway and will ensure that risk to the service is minimised and that service to internal and external customers is maintained.

The HAT project is still in infancy and will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that its objectives are met.

Of your key projects (as identified in your portfolio holder statement) how many were completed and how many are not? Of those that were not completed please indicate what the revised dates are.

Project	Progress	Original milestones	Revised milestones
Completion of Tier 1 Service Redesign in line with project timescale	Complete	Project Start – April 2013 Project Completion – July 2013	N/A – The project <i>has been completed</i> and Tier 1 revised structure in place by July 13.

Continued

Project	Progress	Original milestones	Revised milestones
Completion of Tier 2 Service Redesign in line with project timescale	On Target	Project Start – Sept 2013 Project Completion – April 2014	The project is underway and due to the extent of the service redesign and the volume of work and areas affected, additional time has been allowed to enable informal and formal consultation. Project completion milestone has been <i>revised to September 2014.</i>
Energy Audit of Housing Assets	On Target	Project Start – Sept 2013 Project Completion – March 2014	Project Start – November 2013 Completion to <i>remain at March 2014</i>
Warwick Plant Maintenance Review	Delayed	Project Start – Sept 2013 Project Completion – March 2014	Due to the extent of this project its will not be possible to complete whilst the Housing & Property Services Tier 2 Service Redesign is underway. As a result this project will be included in the <i>SAP for 2014/15.</i>

Project	Progress	Original milestones	Revised milestones
Housing Strategy	On Target	Project Start –Sept 2013 Project Completion – March 2014	There has been a change in personnel resulting in a time delay whilst the recruitment took place and a new appointment made. The report was approved in November 2013 with the date for implementation <i>remaining at March 2014</i> accompanied by the delivery plan
PWC report	Delayed	Project Report – December 2013	PWC were asked to extend the scope of their work to consider an additional option as well as using the new Housing Business Plan as a revised baseline. A revised report has been received and the Service will be using an independent facilitator to assess the options and agree next steps. <i>Now 2014-5 SAP</i>

Does your Service Area Plan/Portfolio Holder Statement need to be amended? If so, please describe the changes.

The *Service Area Plan* has been amended to reflect the above changes and the 2014/5 SAP is currently being constructed.

Cllr Norman Vincett 30 January 2014