



**Service Delivery
Committee**

8 July 2015

**Information and
Decision**

Title: Community Service Update relating to HRA

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1. Introduction

This report is to provide an update to the Service Delivery Committee on the delivery of Landlord Services including relevant of Community services. In addition, the report provides a commentary on activities and performance for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 inclusive.

2. Recommendations

1. Members are asked to note the update as provided
2. Members are asked to agree the targets set for rent arrears

3. Information

Tenants Charter

All Service Charters including performance charters are now being placed on the Council's website. It was agreed that this Committee is to receive exception reports of performance matters related to Landlord services. Below is a brief report on where targets have not been fully met for the period April 2014 to March 2015 inclusive

Rent Arrears:

- Members have been receiving reports throughout the financial year that the targets for both rent arrears and rent collections are falling short due to the introduction of Welfare Reforms in 2012 and it was agreed to monitor these targets before considering the revision of them.
- The target for rent collection was last set over 5 years ago and in view of the current economic climate and austerity measures these targets need reviewing to ensure that achievable and realistic targets are set which whilst remain ambitious remain ambitions they are not impossible. The current target for rent collection is set at 99% and the arrears at 2.5%

- It is proposed that the rent collection target remains at 99%, however, the rent arrears target for the current tenants is set at 3%
- The Council recognises from time to time people will get in to difficulties with their rents based on a number of personal and financial circumstances

| | Target | Jan 2015 | Feb 2015 | March 2015 |
|-----------------------|--------|----------|----------|------------|
| % Rent Collected | 99% | 95.6% | 95.5% | 96% |
| Total current Arrears | | £168,021 | £201,450 | £190,317 |

Gas Safety

Members have requested that they continue to receive regular updates on gas safety compliance.

The table sets out the latest position in relation to gas safety certificates.

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| GAS SERVICE COMPLIANCE AS AT | 30 June 2015 |
| OLDEST CASE CP12 - EXPIRED (CP12 = gas safety certificate) | None at present as 100% compliant |
| % CP 12's COMPLIANT | 100% |

The new gas safety contract commenced in October 2014 following a procurement exercise and Officers are continuing to monitor performance particularly during the early months of the year 1 contract. The Company responded both promptly and decisively, when a customer complaint was received from a tenant who was unable to contact the gas safety contractor direct on their out of hours line.

Update on Capital Programme 2014/15 and Decent Homes

Attached at Appendix 1 is a full progress update on all of the projects in the current Capital Programme.

In financial terms the Capital Programme project team are continuing to monitor the expenditure and will be reporting any virements required in line with the financial regulations to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee.

Boulter Crescent Community House

The Community Development Officer continues to develop the activities being held at the Community House and the surrounding areas, namely, Marrone Square, Junction Road, and Elizabeth Court.

Detailed newsletters of actives held and what events are coming up are posted on the Council web site and all Ward Councillors are notified

The Community House has been part of the refurbished works and is currently housed in temporary accommodation and whilst this has been disruptive to general day to day operations, the impact the disruption has had on community activities has been minimal.

Aids and Adaptations in Council Properties

Council Landlord services have a duty to make provision for aids and adaptations for their tenants who are not entitled to Disability Facilities Grant.

Following a review of the delivery of the Council's Disability Facilities Grants the Property maintenance team adapted the same model to improve service delivery in the Council stock .

16 major adaptations have been completed in the year, these include

- 13 level access shower rooms
- 1 adapted kitchen and Level Access Shower (LAS) upgrade
- 1 outward opening door plus internal and external ramps
- 1 through floor lift (included structural alterations to combine hall/store/cupboard)

8 in progress (plus 12 at initial assessment / drawings stage)

- 2 extensions almost ready to start on site (children referrals)
- 1 extension being drawn up (adult)
- 3 Further LAS on order / on site
- 2 major ramps on order (numerous minor ones done)

12 more LAS currently completing visits most of these will be 2015/16 completions.

Council have been advised that there is a backlog and that the programme of referrals will continue to come.

The Housing Revenue Account set a budget for £70,000 based on previous years spend, however the actual spend on Aids and Adaptations in Council properties at March 2015 was £61,372

Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) and Early Help

This committee have been receiving information on the new county model of operational services for the Children and Young People services being amalgamated in to Supporting Leicestershire Families.

The new teams will be working in localities as part of an expanded Supporting Leicestershire Families Service. This countywide service will address the needs

of children and their families from 0 -19 years and up to 25 years for young people with Special Educational Needs. The service will be targeted at vulnerable children young people and families with additional and or complex needs which cannot be met by community and universal services working in the locality.

Below is a brief summary of the latest updates

- SLF in a transitional phase
- SLF leadership team all in place
- Performance data to be finalised for 14-15 (on old SLF) to be sent out
- In process of finalising cost benefits information
- Children and Families Partnership event on 6th July. Focus on SLF going into the future. Looking at pooled budgets, cost/benefits , feedback arrangements to hear the voice of the families etc.

The team based in the Oadby Wigston Borough Council locality under the new team leader continues to be integrated with the Community Team and is also involved in joint activities with other partners both internal and external to ensure that family's needs are met.

Housing Related Support for older people update

Members have been receiving updates and by way of reminder the

Supporting People funding which supported the Council's Warden provision comes to an end in September 2015.

Consultations with the tenants has been completed and concluded that whilst tenants liked the Warden services they did not wish to fund the service from their rents nor as a separate charge.

A programme of the staff consultations was agreed, however, due to departure of our experienced HR team this has been delayed and will be urgently prioritised to ensure that support services within the housing team are maintained.

The programme of the assisted technology is progressing with the County Providers as advised previously.

Community Team joint initiatives

Dog Fouling

Following a general increase of dog fouling and dog related complaints a joint initiative under the direction of the Corporate Enforcement Team was launched where the Environmental Health Officers and Community Housing team conducted Borough wide dog patrols.

Hot spots identified through pest control activities were targeted and those areas were earmarked first for the patrols. High visibility jackets specifically marked with the Council logo that identified officers as being on dog patrols.

The residents of the Borough responded well to this initiative and engaged with officers on discussing their concerns and or praising the Council for carrying out such visible patrols.

During these patrols officers were able to pass on leaflets and issue information and advice on actions Council can take should people want to be witnesses.

Joint campaigns have also been launched with the support of the “Keep Britain Tidy” initiatives and the team will continue to both patrol and at various points run initiatives.

Community Payback Schemes

Community Housing officers have worked closely with the Probation Officers to work with a team of community payback offenders in clearing up sites and assisting elderly or people with disabilities to tidy up their private garden areas.

A programme of painting of some 30 lamp posts which have graffiti on them have been organised through this scheme.

Heat or Eat

Members will recall that the Council were awarded the remaining of the Local Welfare Fund to distribute locally. Arrangements to offer food parcels and heating vouchers made and to date since the scheme opened in March 2014 some 16 food parcels and 2 heating vouchers have been distributed.

Families receiving this support are not exclusively Council Tenants.

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| Implications | |
|---------------------|---|
| Financial (PL) | The levels of arrears will affect the Council’s net current assets position on its balance sheet and needs intensive management Progress on the Capital schemes will affect the projected out-turn position. |
| Risk (APM) | CR5 – Effective utilisation of assets CR7 - Business continuity |
| Equalities (AC) | No Significant Impact |
| Legal (AC) | No Significant Impact |