



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 20 November 2018	Matter for Information
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Report Title: **Community Services Update (Q2 2018/19)**

Report Author(s): **Steve Nash (Housing Services Manager)**
John Stemp (Community Property Manager)

Purpose of Report:	This report is to provide an update to the Committee regarding the delivery of community services, half-year outturn 2018/19.
Report Summary:	This report includes standing reported items on voids, gas safety, capital projects and disabled facilities grants.
Recommendation(s):	That the contents of the report and appendix be noted.
Responsible Strategic Director, Head of Service and Officer Contact(s):	<p>Stephen Hinds (Director of Finance & Transformation) (0116) 257 2681 stephen.hinds@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Adrian Thorpe (Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration) (0116) 257 2645 adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Steve Nash (Housing Services Manager) (0116) 257 2662 steve.nash@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>John Stemp (Property Manager) (0116) 257 2726 john.stemp@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p>
Corporate Priorities:	An Inclusive and Engaged Borough (CP1) Effective Service Provision (CP2) Green & Safe Places (CP4)
Vision and Values:	"A Strong Borough Together" (Vision) Accountability (V1) Customer Focus (V5)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	Although there are no direct implications arising directly from this report it is worth noting the severe financial pressure that some of these services operate under.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources (CR1) Effective Utilisation of Assets/Buildings (CR5) Regulatory Governance (CR6)
Equalities and Equalities	There are no implications arising from this report.

Assessment (EA):	EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Capital Programme 2018-19 - Q2 Budget Outturn and Update on Progress to 31/10/18.

1. Voids

- 1.1 Quarter 2's performance was 15 working days on average for normal void turnaround which remains below the target of 20 working days. During this period there were 9 properties re-let under the category of a normal void. There were 2 further properties which required major works taking an average of 43.5 days each. The number of void properties remains low.

2. Tenancy Agreement

- 2.1 Preparation of the required notice for consultation is continuing. A draft table of changes has been prepared and is now being considered from a legal perspective to ensure we comply with all necessary statutory provisions. The current target is to commence consultation in December 2018.

3. Homelessness

- 3.1 Homeless presentations have increased since April 2018. Staff must now adhere to the new administrative burdens imposed on the Council by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. There has been a trend in cases becoming complex to investigate and manage as other agencies and support services reduce. As an example the Council is now finding itself regularly accommodating people who we consider lack the essential skills for independent living but whom we are assured do not meet the threshold for statutory support services from health and social care authorities. Hence staff time is being absorbed in dealing with sorting out the problems that arise in temporary accommodation because a larger than expected proportion of customers lack resilience and coping skills. A subset of these customers require the level of support and assistance in day to day living which falls outside of the remit of the Housing Options team.
- 3.2 The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 has been in force since April 2018 and in that time 198 homeless applications have been made.
- 3.3 A central plank of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 was the concept of producing a plan that if followed would either prevent a customer from becoming homeless or would move

them from being homeless back into secure accommodation. It was envisaged that a range of tasks would be discussed and agreed, some for action by the client and others by a Housing Options Officer. Certain actions would be critical and others merely recommendations. Examples of the types of actions would include searching for a private rental, making a Housing Application or asking a Court to suspend a possession order on terms to include repaying arrears alongside the rental.

- 3.4 Such plans are referred to as Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) and they are to be produced at the homeless prevention stage (if this applies) and at the homeless relief stage (if this applies). Officers use an IT system called HOPE to help them produce and manage plans.
- 3.5 The intention is that customers take on board the actions listed in the plan and work really hard to either prevent their homelessness or to relieve their homelessness. The Act considered the scenario of what should be done in the event that customers were less than keen to engage with the plan process. The Act envisages each Local Authority having a policy which could be used to apply pressure to those customers not engaging with their plans, the ultimate sanction being the ceasing of one of a range of homeless duties.
- 3.6 Officers are reviewing the level of engagement with plans and are considering options moving forward which may include adopting a policy to encourage engagement with plans. At present, with a few notable exceptions, staff report a poor level of engagement amongst most customers with their Personal Housing Plans. Officers are also monitoring the impact of the new Act and any resultant changes to resourcing that may be required as a result.
- 3.7 At the end of October there were 27 households in temporary accommodation. Of these households, 14 are in self-contained accommodation sourced from within the Council's own stock with 13 in other accommodation including the Council's Homeless Hostel and nightly spot paid annexes, shared houses and hotels in Leicester. The Council's own hostel, Belmont House, has enjoyed good occupancy rates and is currently full. To date Officers report that residents of Belmont House are generally content with how the Council is operating the hostel. A Christmas tree has been purchased and will be erected at the end of November. The hostel has benefitted from several improvements including a sofa and a garden bench.

4. Gas Safety

- 4.1 100% compliance was achieved to 30 September 2018. All services and safety checks for the month of October have also been completed, as at 24 October 2018.
- 4.2 The procurement of a new gas service contract has now been rescheduled to run from 1 April 2019 so the Council is not exposed to the risks of changing contractor mid-winter.

5. Repairs Service

- 5.1 The budget outturn for responsive repairs for the six months to 30 September 2018 was £146,624 against a budget of £147,500.
- 5.2 This budget will need to be monitored closely through the winter months in case it comes under pressure from increased demands.

6. Capital Programme Update

- 6.1 An update report detailing progress made at half-year outturn is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 6.2 The budget is only 30% committed at this point. For most of 2018 the delivery team for all

property services has been running with 2 rather than 3 Officers and this has impacted on delivery. The team is currently fully staffed, though one Officer is temporary whilst permanent recruitment takes place.

- 6.3 The Management Team and Property Manager are currently looking at how best to engage further resources to achieve catch up of this programme and delivery of the 2019/20 Capital Programme and this is being actively pursued.

7. Lightbulb Update (DFG's and Related Services)

- 7.1 A presentation was received by Full Council at its meeting held on 2 October 2018 delivered directly by Senior Officers running the County wide Lightbulb Project. This covered the key improvements, challenges and learning points recognised from the project to date. This included confirmation that in terms of initial processing times to access the service OWBC is on par with the average for all Districts (25 days waiting to be processed, 9 days to be processed). It was also confirmed that overall DFG delivery times were shorter under Lightbulb (24.75 weeks average for 51 cases) than they had been under OWBC (40.5 weeks average for 23 cases).
- 7.2 A check has been made with Lightbulb on the current status with regard to production of the full Performance Dashboard and we have been advised that system testing is currently being undertaken and should be completed by the end of November 2018. Assuming this goes to plan the full Performance Dashboard should be available for the (Officer attended) Delivery Group Meeting to be held 12 December 2018 and for reporting to the next Service Delivery Committee Meeting to be held on 29th January 2019.

8. Churchill Close – Refurbishment and Reopening of Lower Floor of Car Park

- 8.1 The works were completed in September and the car park has re-opened. 11 of the 25 spaces have been let (at 31 October 2018). Shortly after opening, intruders to the lower parking deck damaged cars on 2 separate occasions. We have now installed a CCTV system as a deterrent against future vandalism. The vandalism may have reduced demand temporarily which we anticipate will improve once the County Council has fully implemented its parking restriction scheme.
- 8.2 We understand approval of the restricted parking scheme is progressing at County but we do not yet have a date for it to be introduced.