

# Item no.

**Report to:** Regeneration Services Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 16 July 2007  
**Report of:** Head of Housing  
**Subject:** Service Unit Performance Reporting – Housing Services  
**Ward:** All

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 The report is intended to provide members of the Regeneration Services Scrutiny Committee with performance information in respect of East Durham Homes and the Housing Service for the 4th quarter of the last financial year.

## **2.0 Consultation**

2.1 In preparing this report I have consulted with the Council's Service Support Manager and the Business Development Manager at East Durham Homes.

## **3.0 Background**

3.1 Since the establishment of East Durham Homes (EDH) in April 2004 a detailed performance report in respect of the service areas managed by East Durham Homes has been presented to the Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

3.2 From April 2006 the report has also contained relevant performance information in relation to the Council's Housing Service which include:

Housing Renewal  
Housing Policy and Strategy  
Supported Housing  
Service Support

## **4.0 Performance to end of 31 March 2007 (2006/07 Quarter 4).**

4.1 All service areas managed by East Durham Homes and those in the Housing Service are subject to performance monitoring by way of either statutory Best Value Performance Indicators or locally agreed indicators. These indicators are set out in Appendices 1 & 3 to this report, and are identified as BV (Best Value), EDH (East Durham Homes) or HOUS (Housing Service).

4.2 It has previously been practice to set performance targets annually, however from 1 April 2007 targets have been profiled on a quarterly basis wherever possible. This will produce a more robust performance monitoring system particularly in areas where there might be seasonal fluctuations or planned work arranged at various times throughout the year.

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## East Durham Homes

### 4.3 Performance Indicators

There are 17 Key Indicators selected for monitoring purposes, which comprise 5 Best Value Performance Indicators and 12 locally agreed indicators.

Appendix 1 sets out East Durham Homes' performance against these indicators and targets which have been set. In addition there is information for 9 of the indicators which shows the performance of the top performing organisations that subscribe to HouseMark which is the Audit Commission's recommended benchmarking club.

In summary 6 (35.3%) of the 17 indicators are on target, 3 (17.6%) are within the 5% tolerance and 8 (47.1%) are not on target. Of the 9 indicators where benchmarking information is available from HouseMark 3 represent upper quartile performance and 6 represent lower quartile performance.

The key area of concern is again the average re-let times where there has been only a slight improvement since the 3rd quarter although there has been a reduction of 28.6% since 2005/06. I have been informed that there has been further improvement in the 1st quarter of this financial year.

Another area of concern is the percentage of void repair jobs completed on time, where performance has fallen throughout 2006/07 to 93.10% overall. E.D.H.'s performance was 94.96 % and Morrison Facilities Services was 82.13%.

However, the amount of rent collected has again increased in the 4th quarter and performance represents HouseMark top quartile performance.

Likewise, the percentage of former tenant rent arrears "written off" has reduced from 0.99% in 2005/06 to 0.30% in 2006/07 which again represents top quartile performance.

The other area where top quartile performance has been achieved is in the percentage of tenants stating they are satisfied with opportunities for participation in management and decision making, where there has been an increase of 12.3% in 2006/07.

Members are asked to note that overall there has been a reduction of £53,887 in the total of all rent arrears (i.e. current, former tenant and sub-account) in 2006/07. This figure was calculated taking into account the reduction in former tenant rent arrears "written off" between 2005/06 and 2006/07 which was £148,218.

### 4.4 Complaints and Compliments

In the 4th Quarter of 2006/07 EDH received a total of 106 complaints of which 55 were found to be justified. There was also a total of 24 compliments received. Details of the complaints received is provided in Appendix 2.

I must point out that since the 2nd Quarter of 2006/07 the number of complaints and compliments received by EDH has increased. However this could be due to any one or more of the following improvements EDH made in relation to the handling of complaints and compliments during 2006/07:

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- reviewed complaints procedure
- implemented an improved recording system which is monitored by staff in a central team
- promoted the complaints procedure via the website, tenants newsletters and in customer service outlets
- tenants are now able to make complaints or compliments by telephone, via the website, or using the standard leaflet which now includes a “freepost” reply.

## 4.5 Capital Programme

At the end of the financial year East Durham Homes were able to deliver the majority of schemes outlined in the Capital Programme for 2006/07 with a 96.9% spend of the total sum allocated.

Members will be aware that East Durham Homes Capital Programme is monitored on a regular basis by the Capital Programme Working Group. Copies of the monitoring reports and minutes of the meetings are available on request from Sylvia Brown, Service Support Manager.

### **Housing Service**

## 4.6 Performance Indicators

At the present time there are 8 statutory Best Value Performance Indicators for which the Housing Service is responsible. In addition there are 20 local indicators that have recently been agreed and targets set.

Appendix 3 sets out our performance against these indicators and the targets that have been set.

In summary, there is no performance information available for 5 of the indicators, and of the 23 indicators where information is available 10 (43.5%) are on target, 4 (17.4%) are within the 5% tolerance and 9 (39.1 %) are not on target.

### *Housing Renewal Team*

## 4.7 Private Sector Housing

A new Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy and Financial Assistance policy are in development and will be coming forward for Council approval within the forthcoming months.

Within the Easington Renewal area a proposal for Selective Licensing of Privately Rented Accommodation is being progressed. Residents and landlords within the area have been consulted and the consensus is a resounding 'Yes' to a licensing scheme. A submission must be made to CLG and a report will be coming forward to Council within the next two months.

In the 'B' Street clearance area of Easington Colliery the last three houses have now been demolished and the site has been grassed over.

In Dawdon the Group Repair Scheme in Mount Stewart Street is now complete apart from 18 door canopies which were a late addition. These will be completed along with work in Melbury Street which is currently out for tender with work due to start late summer 2007.

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## *Energy Conservation*

### 4.8 Climate Change

The draft District of Easington Climate Change Action Plan has been finalised and a district wide carbon dioxide emissions baseline established at 692,000 tonnes. The Action Plan will be presented to Management Team in July 2007 where approval will be requested to take forward to Executive.

### 4.9 Insulation Programme to Council Dwellings

Under this programme settlements are targeted on a worst first basis with the scheme currently operating within Peterlee. During the period covered by this report a total of 285 council properties have had cavity wall and loft insulation measures installed. In addition, the "Over 60's Free Insulation Scheme" has insulated 126 private sector homes using a combination of capital and external funding.

### 4.10 Warm Homes Campaign

In order to maximise the uptake of fuel poverty grant schemes a rolling programme of community promotional events are continuing district wide with Sure Start, community groups and Primary Care Trust staff.

## *Housing Policy and Strategy Team*

### 4.11 Development of new District Housing Strategy

Work is almost complete to produce a housing strategy for 2007-2012. The document contains a vision and four strategic aims with a number of key objectives and actions to ensure these aims are delivered. Performance indicators have also been set to monitor the outcomes to tenants. A three year action plan is included which sets out key actions, who will be responsible and the outcomes for residents.

The housing strategy will be supported by a number of key documents including the homelessness strategy, older persons strategy, affordable warmth strategy, affordable housing policy, and private sector renewal & financial assistance policy.

It is anticipated that the draft document will be submitted for Council approval by August 2007. The document will then be launched to stakeholders at an event scheduled to take place later in the year.

### 4.12 Area Renewal & Settlement Plans

- Pattison Gardens, Blackhall – Barratts have been awarded planning permission for the development of this scheme which will include 6 bungalows for rent owned by DOE and managed by EDH. Work should commence on this area very shortly.
- Welfare Close, Easington – All flats have now been demolished and the options for the future use of the land will be considered for development as part of the Area Development Framework. A "stopping up" order has been applied for the footpaths prior to commencement of the demolitions of the garages.

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- Burns & Moore Terrace, Shotton – All properties have been let in Burns Terrace and of the 8 properties agreed for marketing 1 has been completed and 7 are with solicitors. 35-42 Moore Terrace have now been demolished and negotiations are now ongoing with the remaining tenant and 2 owners in the block 27-34 Moore Terrace following which these properties will also be demolished.
- Thornlaw North, Thornley – The last block of houses has now been handed over to Persimmon Homes who will shortly demolish in order to complete the development of the site.
- Thornlaw South, Thornley – There still remains 3 households to be rehoused from this area of 22 properties. 6 houses have already been demolished and demolition of the remaining blocks will be programmed following completion of the bat survey and report.
- Coopers Close, Thornley – only 1 tenant remains to be rehoused and the contract is currently being prepared to carry out the demolitions on the estate.
- Argyle Place, South Hetton – 7 tenants remain to be rehoused from the 54 flats in this area. We are still in negotiations with Accent Homes who have submitted a bid to the Housing Corporation to develop bungalows and houses for rent and a percentage of shared ownership on the Argyle site and adjacent land.
- Edenhill, Peterlee – The successful developer (Gladedale) is currently awaiting planning permission for this site following which work will begin in the area to improve the existing properties for owner occupation and to develop on the open land.

## *Supported Housing Team*

### 4.13 Supported Housing

The Supporting People Care Services contract commenced on the 1 April 2007 of the process.

The Council's Care Services section is now the sole Supporting People contract holder for Warden Services in the district and we currently finalising a Service Level Agreement with the Registered Social Landlords detailing the level of support and service to their tenants.

#### Homelessness & Housing Advice Service

### 4.14 The Homelessness and Housing Advice Service has adopted the Legal Service Commission Specialist Quality Mark. This comprises a set of standards to ensure that the service is well run and has its own quality control mechanisms that assures the quality of the information or advice the service provides.

The service has undergone a full review, re-branding and was launched at an event at the Glebe Centre, Murton on 13 June 2007 with 112 delegates from 30+ organisations and the CLG Homelessness Special Advisor as guest speaker.

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## *Service Support*

### 4.15 Complaints and Compliments

In the 4th quarter of 2006/07 there were 4 complaints and 11 compliments received in relation to the service. Details of these complaints and compliments are provided in Appendix 4.

## **5.0 Implications**

### Financial Implications

#### 5.1 There are no direct financial implications.

### Legal Implications

#### 5.2 The report complies with the reporting requirements contained in the Management Agreement between the Council and East Durham Homes.

### Policy Implications

#### 5.3 There are no policy implications.

### Risk Implications

#### 5.4 A risk assessment has been completed and the necessary actions required to manage the identified risks will be implemented.

### Communications

#### 5.5 Appropriate monitoring information contained in the report will be communicated via the Council's Website, Infopoint, Tenants' Newsletter and Notice Boards.

## **6.0 Corporate Implications**

### Corporate Plan and Priorities

#### 6.1 The evaluation of performance by East Durham Homes will maintain an overview of the company's contribution to the Council's Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives.

The Housing Service plan makes a direct contribution to the Corporate Objectives of Decent Homes for All, Building a Healthy Community and Quality Services for Our People.

### Equality and Diversity

#### 6.2 There are no equality and diversity implications.

### E-Government Implications

#### 6.3 There are no E-Government implications.

### Procurement Implications

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6.4 There are no procurement implications.

## **7.0 Recommendation**

7.1 Members are recommended to note the information provided in the appendices to this report.

Background Papers/Documents used in the preparation of this report.

- Corporate and Performance Plan 2005/2006
- Housing Service Plan 2006/2007
- Files in Housing Strategy Unit
- East Durham Homes Performance files