

Report to: Regeneration Services Scrutiny Committee
Date: 10 December 2007
Report of: Head of Housing
Subject: Service Unit Performance Reporting – Housing Services
Ward: All

1.0 Purpose of the 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 first two quarters of the current financial year.

2.0 Consultation

- 2.1. In preparing this report I have consulted with the Council's Service Support Manager and the Senior Management Team 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 EDH 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 30 September 2007 (2007/08 Quarters 1 & 2)

- 4.1 All service areas managed by EDH 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 & 2 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, with the exception of those indicators that are collated annually. This will produce a more robust performance monitoring system particularly in areas where there might be seasonal fluctuations or planned work at various times throughout the year.
- 4.3 In addition there is information included, where available, that shows the performance of EDH and the Housing Service in relation to other organisations, provided by either the Audit Commission or HouseMark which is the Audit Commission's recommended benchmarking club.
- 4.4 Also included are the trends in performance from the end of the 2nd quarter 2006/07 to that at the end of the 2nd quarter 2007/08.

East Durham Homes

4.5 Performance Indicators

There has recently been a review of the 17 Key Indicators previously selected for monitoring purposes, which comprised 5 Best Value Performance Indicators and 12 locally agreed indicators.

Following the review there are now 18 Key Indicators selected for monitoring that comprise 5 Best Value Performance Indicators and 13 locally agreed indicators. This includes BVPI 74(a) & BVPI 75(a) in relation to customer satisfaction and participation that will only be reported every 3 years and BVPI 184(a) that is only collated on an annual basis.

The indicators that have changed are as follows:

- Percentage of rent lost through L.A. dwellings becoming vacant - deleted
- Total number of void dwellings as a percentage of the stock - deleted
- Average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs - added
- Percentage of lettable properties that are void - added
- Number of long-term void properties (not to be re-let) - added

Appendix 1 sets out East Durham Homes' performance against these indicators and targets that have been set.

In summary, 9 (60.00%) of the 15 indicators are on target, 2 (13.33%) are within the 5% tolerance and 4 (26.67%) are not on target.

Of the 7 indicators where benchmarking information is available 1 represents upper quartile performance and 6 represent median quartile performance.

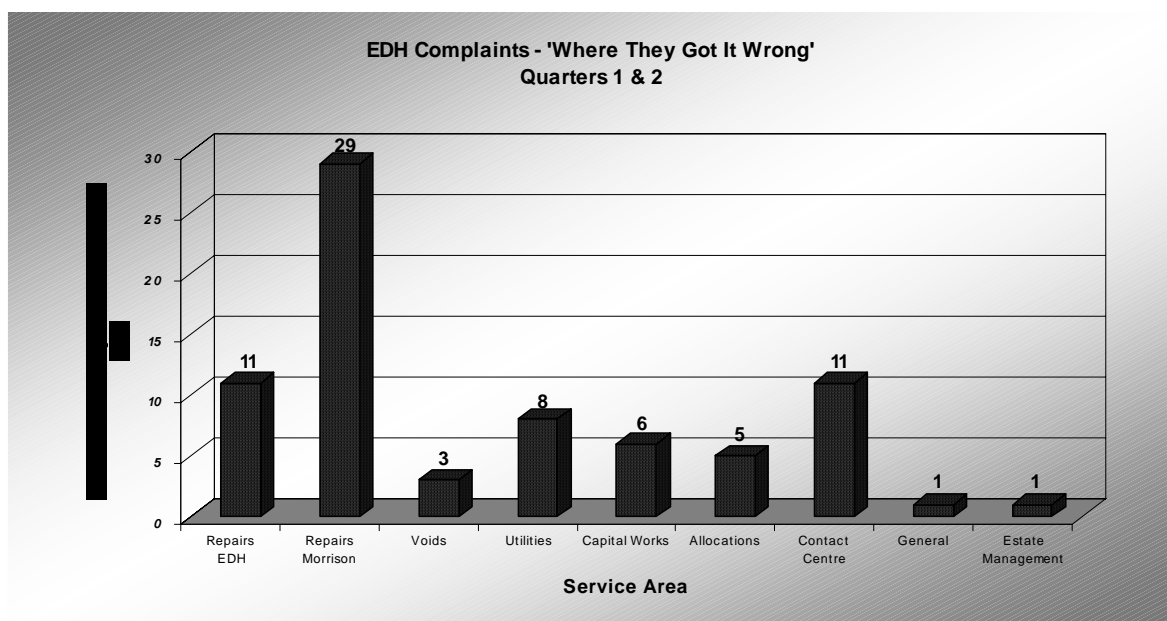
In comparison to performance at the end of the 2nd quarter 2006/07 there has been an improvement in 12 (85.71%) of the indicators and a reduction in 2 (14.29%). There is no information for the other indicator, which was previously only collated annually.

Overall, there has been a significant improvement in performance in relation to the Key Indicators that are monitored. With regard to the 4 Key Indicators where the targets have not been met, suitable explanations have been provided and these are included in Appendix 1.

4.6 Complaints and Compliments

In the first 2 quarters of 2006/07 EDH received a total of 166 complaints of which 75 were found to be justified – 'where they got it wrong.' A breakdown of these complaints is shown by service area in the graph shown overleaf.

During the same period there were a total of 53 compliments received. These compliments were spread out across most of the service areas although there were more received for the Repairs & Maintenance and Utilities Services where 12 & 8 were received respectively.



4.7 Capital Programme

At the end of the second quarter the overall spend is below that projected but not of such an order to be of concern. Action has been taken to bring the spend back into alignment with the profile in the third quarter.

The document which is used as the basis for monitoring the performance of the programme in terms of spend and completion of the works is submitted to the Capital Programme Working Group on a quarterly basis. A copy of the document is available on request from Sylvia Brown, Service Support Manager.

Housing Service

4.8 Performance Indicators

There has also been a review of the 28 Key Indicators from the Housing Service that had previously been selected for monitoring purposes.

Following the review there are now 30 Key Indicators, which comprise 5 Best Value Indicators, and 25 locally agreed indicators.

The indicators that have been changed are as follows:

- Proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished directly by the local authority - deleted
- Proportion of cases where informal action has resulted in remedial work being undertaken within the prescribed timescales – added
- Percentage of intercom calls answered within 30 seconds - added
- Percentage of intercom calls answered within 60 seconds – added
- Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation of households that are intentionally homeless and in priority need - deleted
- Percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation - deleted
- Proportion of households accepted as statutory homeless who were accepted as statutory homeless by the same authority within the last two years - deleted

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- Percentage of customers stating they are satisfied with the housing advice service (CAB) - deleted
- Number of clients where homelessness is prevented as a direct result of casework intervention - added
- Reduce the total number of homelessness presentations (all groups) - added
- Reduce the total number of homelessness presentations (16 - 17 year olds) – added

In summary 2 of the 30 Key Indicators are only collated annually. Of the other 28 indicators there are 23 (82.14%) on target, 1 (3.57%) is within the 5% tolerance and 4 (14.29%) are not on target.

Of the 3 indicators where benchmarking information is available 1 represents upper quartile performance and 2 represent median quartile performance.

In comparison to performance at the end of the 2nd quarter 2006/07 there has been an improvement in 12 (54.55%) of the indicators, performance has remained the same for

6 (27.27%) of the indicators and there has been a reduction in 4 (18.18%) of the indicators. There is no information available for 6 of the indicators that were only introduced this year and the other 2 indicators are only collated annually.

Of the 4 indicators where performance is not on target, I would like to point out that the performance has increased in 3 of these in comparison to the same period last year and there is no information available for the other indicator.

Housing Renewal Team

4.9 Private Sector Housing

The Accredited Private Landlords Scheme has undergone a full review and re-branding. One of the improvements made is that vacant properties to rent are now advertised on the Council's website and applications can be made on-line.

The Empty Homes Officer post has recently been filled, and the new Officer will be starting in the New Year.

Energy Conversation

4.10 Climate Change

Climate Change Youth Conferences have taken place at the Glebe Centre, Murton and Easington Community School. Over 120 pupils from 16 schools attended the conferences where they participated in climate change educational activities. A rolling programme of classroom based climate change activities will now be undertaken with the schools that attended these events.

4.11 Warm Homes Campaign

A rolling programme of community training events have now taken place in every settlement within the district. To date 98 community champions have been trained and the programme will now be extended to staff from partner organisations.

Easington's Warm Homes Campaign has recently been named as one of the 12 winners of the National Energy Action's Affordable Warmth Award.

4.12 Insulation Scheme to Council Offices

All un-insulated office buildings at the Seaside Lane complex have now had cavity wall and loft insulation measures installed with the aim of reducing utility expenditure and greenhouse gas emissions.

Housing Policy and Strategy Team

4.13 Development of new District Housing Strategy

A new housing strategy has now been produced for the period 2007-2012 and the document will be submitted to Council for approval in December 2007.

The document contains a vision and four strategic aims with a number of key objectives and actions to ensure these aims are delivered.

The four strategic aims cover:

- standards of housing
- directing housing investment into areas which will benefit the District
- delivering affordable housing
- helping vulnerable groups of people to live independently in their own homes

4.14 Area Renewal and Settlement Plans

Each of the regeneration areas have had a project plan completed and have been signed off as part of East Durham Homes Improvement Plan.

It is anticipated that the target of completing 50% of the plans by March 2008 will be met and as part of the Asset Management Strategy currently being produced additional areas may be identified for consideration in the future.

- Thornley - All properties have been demolished at Coopers Close and only 6 remain to be demolished at St Cuthbert Road. A development brief for Thornlaw South will be circulated soon that will include the provision of new two bedroom bungalows to replace the existing one bedroom bungalows at Greenwood Cottages.
- Pattison Gardens, Blackhall - This development is still being delayed due to provision of stopping-up orders.
- Edenhill Estate, Peterlee - Planning permission has now been granted for this scheme and it is anticipated that Gladedale will complete the sale and start on site by the end of this month.
- Argyle Place, South Hetton - Funding for this scheme has now been granted by the Housing Corporation, planning permission has been submitted and the start on site is scheduled for February 2008.

Supported Housing Team

4.15 Care Services

The Supporting People Contract was introduced in April 2007. A requirement of this contract was that support plans had to be produced for every customer. The purpose of

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the plans is to identify the customer's support needs and to ensure they are receiving the appropriate level of support. There are now 71% of these support plans completed.

The Service is a provider of Telecare equipment, which enables vulnerable clients to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. There are now 56 residents in the district benefiting from this service who have been provided with a number of different types of equipment including bed sensors, fall detectors, wandering devices and gas shut off valves.

There is now a Telecare Co-ordinator in post whose role includes liaising with clients, families and carers prior to and after the equipment is fitted. This post is funded by the Preventative Technology Grant that is administered by Durham County Council. 'Telecare Champions' have been appointed from the partnership agencies in order to promote and raise awareness of the service.

4.16 Homelessness and Housing Advice

The Homelessness and Housing Advice Service have implemented the Bond Guarantee Scheme and the Homelessness Prevention Fund that enables customers to access private sector accommodation.

In partnership with Centre Point and the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder the service has funded a new life skills course for 16-25 year olds. The initiative called Easington Life Wise Project is aimed at reducing the number of young people who are unable to sustain tenancies and prepare them for independent living.

The service has also been awarded regional champions status by the Government Department of Communities and Local Government (C.L.G.) for excellence in homelessness prevention.

4.17 Service Support

In the first 2 quarters there were a total of 4 complaints received. Two of these complaints were found to be justified – 'where we got it wrong' and I have taken these complaints up with the relevant Service Manager and steps have been put in place to prevent a re-occurrence of similar complaints.

Staff in the unit continue to carry out regular monitoring, customer satisfaction surveys and quality assurance checks in respect of both the services we provide to our customers and those that are provided by EDH. Although the information obtained is only reported and addressed internally by the relevant service managers it helps to ensure the services provided to our customers are continually improved.

5.0 Policy, Legal, Financial, Risk, Communications and Corporate Implications

5.1 Policy Implications

There are no direct implications.

5.2 Legal Implications

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

5.3 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications.

5.4 Risk Implications

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

5.5 Communications

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

6.1 Corporate Plan and Priorities

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.

6.2 Equality and Diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications.

6.3 E Government

There are no E-Government Implications.

6.4 Procurement

There are no procurement implications.

7.0 Recommendations

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

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

- Corporate and Performance Plan 2006/07
- Housing Service Plan 2007/08
- Files in Housing Service Unit
- East Durham Homes Performance Files

