

**Report to:** Regeneration Services Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 21 April 2008  
**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 3rd quarter 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 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 EDH has been presented to either the former Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee or more recently to the Regeneration Services Scrutiny Committee.

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 December 2007 ( 2007/08 Quarters 1, 2 & 3 )**

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 From 1 April 2007 targets have been profiled on a quarterly basis with the exception of those indicators that are only collated annually. This ensures 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 comparison 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 3rd quarter 2006/07 to that at the end of the 3rd quarter 2007/08.

## East Durham Homes

### 4.5 Performance Indicators

There are 18 Key Indicators selected for monitoring purposes, which comprise 5 statutory Best Value Performance Indicators and 13 locally agreed indicators. This includes BVPIs 74(a) & 75(a) in relation to customer satisfaction and participation that are only reported every 3 years and BVPI 184(a) that is only collated on an annual basis.

In summary, 9 (60%) of the 15 indicators are on target, 3 (20%) are within the 5% tolerance and 3 (20%) are not on target.

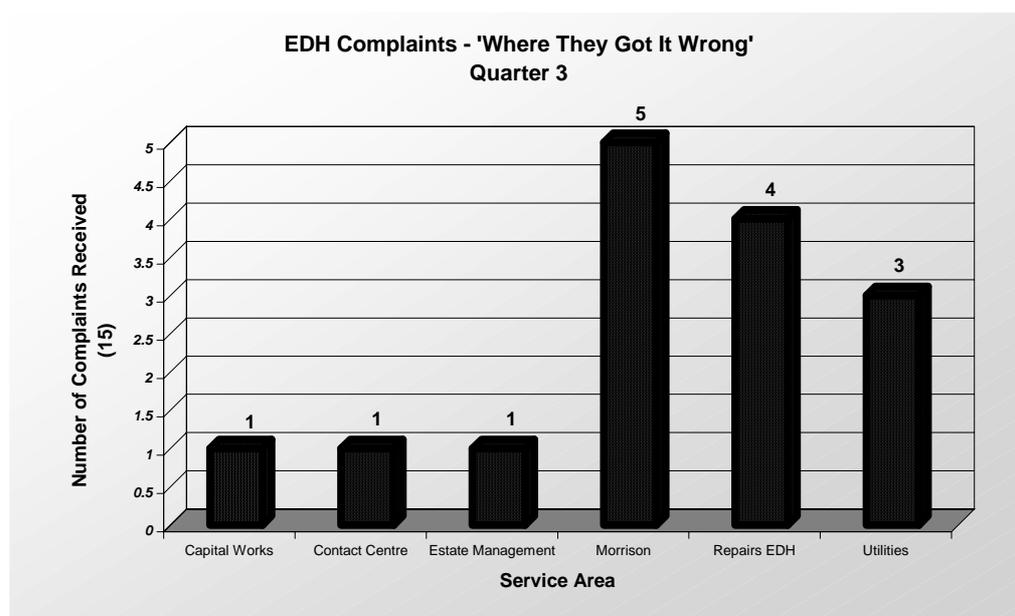
Of the 7 indicators where benchmarking information is available 2 represent upper quartile performance, 3 represent median quartile performance and 2 represent lower quartile performance.

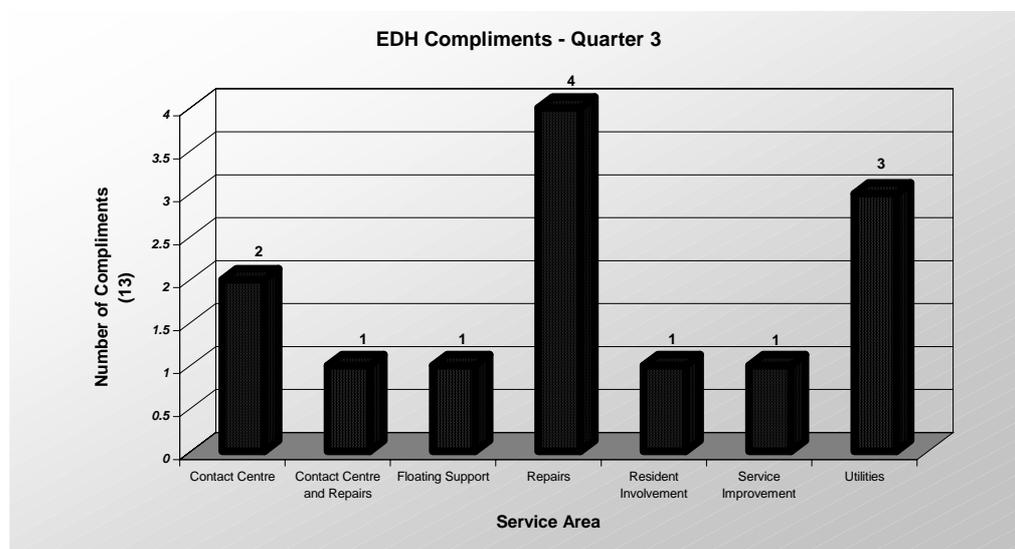
In comparison to performance at the end of the 3rd quarter 2006/07 there has been an improvement in 11 (73.3%) of the indicators and a reduction in 4 (26.7%).

Overall, there has been further improvement in performance in relation to the Key Indicators that are monitored. With regard to the 3 Key Indicators where the targets have not been met, appropriate explanations have been included in Appendix 1.

### 4.6 Complaints and Compliments

In the 3rd quarter of 2007/08 EDH received a total of 40 complaints of which 15 were found to be justified – 'where they got it wrong.' During the same period there was a total of 13 compliments received. The breakdown of these complaints and compliments are shown by service area in the following graphs.





## 4.7 Capital Programme

At the end of the 3rd 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.

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 this document is available on request from Sylvia Brown, Service Support Manager.

## Housing Service

### 4.8 Performance Indicators

At the present time there are 30 Key Indicators used for monitoring purposes. 5 of these are statutory Best Value Performance Indicators for which the Housing Service is responsible and 25 are local indicators that have been agreed.

In summary, 2 of the 30 Key Indicators are only collated annually. Of the other 28 indicators there are 20 (71.43%) on target, 3 (10.71%) are within the 5% tolerance and 5 (17.86%) are not on target.

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

In comparison to performance at the end of the 3rd quarter 2006/07 there has been an improvement in 12 (54.54%) of the indicators, performance has remained the same in 5 (22.73%) of the indicators and there has been a reduction in 5 (22.73%) of the indicators. There is no information available for 2006/07 for 6 of the indicators that were only introduced this year and the other 2 indicators are only collated annually.

## *Housing Renewal Team*

### 4.9 Private Sector Housing

The Empty Homes Officer is now in post and work on updating the 'empty homes database' is progressing. The Officer is currently identifying ownership of some of the most problematic properties in the district and consulting with the relevant agencies to agree the best approach to ensure a satisfactory outcome.

In Easington the 'Wembley Initiative' is being developed and door to door consultation will take place in the near future to ensure residents are involved in shaping plans for the physical transformation of the area.

The Dawdon Phase VI Group Repair Scheme is now complete and plans are being developed to continue the improvement work in the Dawdon area.

The proposal for Selective Licensing will be presented to Council in April prior to submitting it to the Communities and Local Government.

### 4.10 Climate Change

A new District Climate Strategy Change has been produced for the period 2008-2013 and has now been approved by Council.

The document contains the following 6 key priority areas which are aimed at reducing district wide carbon dioxide emissions by 10% by 2013:

- Domestic housing
- Provision of advice and information
- Council operations
- Local businesses
- Renewable energy
- Vehicle operations

### 4.11 Warm Homes Campaign

The district wide rolling programme is continuing to promote the Free Over 60's Home Insulation Scheme and the rolling programme of insulation to council dwellings.

The Campaign was short listed for the national Local Government Chronicle Awards for its activities in supporting local communities.

## *Housing Policy and Strategy Team*

### 4.12 District Housing Strategy

A new housing strategy has been prepared for the period 2008-2011 and the document will be submitted to Council for approval on 16 April 2008.

The document contains a vision and 4 strategic aims with a number of key objectives and actions to ensure these aims are delivered to meet the housing needs and

requirements of the people in the district.

The 4 strategic aims cover:

- Standards of housing in the public and private sectors
- Directing housing investment into areas which will benefit the district
- Increase the choice of housing offer and the delivery of affordable housing
- Helping vulnerable groups of people to live independently in their own homes

#### 4.13 Area Renewal and Settlement Plans

Project plans for each of the regeneration areas are continuing to progress and the target of reducing the number of non lettable void properties to under 100 by 31 March 2008 has been achieved. The total number of non lettable voids at the current time is 86.

##### Demolitions

Re-housing of the remaining tenants in St. Cuthbert Road & Greenwood Cottages in Thornley, Peterlee Cottages in Wheatley Hill and Bevan Square in Murton is progressing well and demolitions on the 4 sites should begin in April/May 2008.

As there is now a court date for the 'Stopping Up' Order for the Welfare Close garage site, these garages will be demolished by the end of this month.

##### Current Schemes

The development of Phase 1 at Argyle Place, South Hetton that will include 9 bungalows commenced on 26 March 2008. Phase 2 of the development for mixed tenure housing will begin following completion of the first phase which should be in or around November 2008.

Barratt Homes are now on site at Pattison Gardens, Blackhall and the 6 bungalows to be built for the Council as part of the development should be completed by July 2008.

The successful developer, Gladedale Homes Ltd. is now on site at Edenhill, Peterlee and will be building properties for sale as well as improving some void properties for owner occupation.

##### New Schemes

The 2 bids submitted to the Housing Corporation in the last bidding round for bungalows at Leech Court, Easington and a mixed tenure scheme at Turnbull Crescent, Murton have been successful and work will now take place with our R.S.L. partners to progress these schemes.

Coopers Close, Thornley will be included in the brief to be circulated to consultants for development of the central Thornley area.

We are now working on new schemes for Housing Corporation funding at Welfare Close, Easington and 2 sites at Moore Terrace & King Street, Shotton.

*Supported Housing Team*

#### 4.14 Care Services

The service has recently been inspected by the Durham and Districts Supporting People Team. The main purpose of the interim service review was to:

- Evidence adherence to the specification
- Ensure compliance
- Consider performance evidence
- Validate elements of the Quality Assessment Framework
- Talk to staff and service users
- Consult with stakeholders
- Consider risks

An interim report has been received and discussions are currently taking place regarding certain elements of the report. In particular there have been issues raised on the Support Planning Process and work is currently underway to produce a service improvement plan to address these issues.

The service will be subject to a full service review in June 2008 and that will be followed by an independent evaluation.

#### 4.15 Homelessness and Housing Advice

Following the implementation of the Bond Guarantee Scheme, homelessness has been prevented and allowed access to private rented accommodation for 11 families.

As a result of improved prevention measures, investigations are currently taking place to identify alternative uses for some of the 11 temporary accommodation units which have been under occupied in recent months.

In total, at the end of the 3rd quarter 130 families were prevented from becoming homeless. The number of homelessness applications had also reduced from 186 in the 3rd quarter 2006/07 to 116 at the present time.

#### *Service Support*

#### 4.16 Complaints and Compliments

During the 3rd quarter there were no complaints received in respect of the Housing Service. There were 4 compliments received, 3 of these were in relation to Care Services and the other for Service Support.

Staff in the unit continue to carry out regular monitoring, customer satisfaction surveys and quality assurance checks in respect of the services we provide and those that are provided by EDH. The feedback obtained is reported and addressed by service managers and it helps to ensure the services provided to our customers are improved on a continuous basis.

### **5.0 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 Homes.

## 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.

### 6.5 Local Government Restructure

There are no 'Local Government Restructure' implications.

## 7.0 Recommendation

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

**Item no.**

