

Report of Chief Executive of Aire Valley Homes Leeds

Report to South Leeds (Inner) Area Committee

Date: Wednesday 20th June 2012

Subject: Aire Valley Homes Service Delivery Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	City & Hunslet Beeston & Holbeck Middleton Park
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Aire Valley Homes Leeds (AVHL) is the provider for housing management services for 15,500 homes within the South and South East areas of the City
2. The details contained within this report are intended to provide the Inner South Area Committee with an update on how AVHL are contributing to the key city wide service delivery priorities and how we are engaged in partnership work to improve local services that are responsive to the needs of local communities.
3. The details contained within this report are also intended to provide the Inner South Area Committee with an update on AVHL current performance and levels of customer satisfaction.

Recommendations

The Area Committee are asked to note the content of the attached report and raise any queries.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the attached report is to provide Members of the Inner South Area Committee with an update on areas of activity and performance.

The report will also highlight areas of joint work that are currently ongoing between AVHL and other Council services to deliver a comprehensive service that is responsive to the needs of individual local communities.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Since the Service Level Agreement has been agreed between the Area Committee and the Locality Team, AVHL has been working closely with the Area Leader and the Locality Manager to integrate local service provision to pool resources, avoid duplication and deliver VFM.

The emphasis for effective service delivery for AVHL has been refocused over recent months and whilst good quality housing management service delivery is the core function of the organisation there has been a recognition that in order to deliver against its key strategic objectives there needs to be a focus on increased customer satisfaction, working in partnership with other service providers and working within community boundaries rather than specific housing estates.

3.0 Main issues

3.1 Partnership working

3.1.1 Inner South Area Panel

In addition to the funds that are available through the Well Being Budget the Inner South Area Panel has been allocated £90k which is used to fund local schemes that are submitted from a range of local community groups. Due to match funded bids this has generated nearly £300k of additional income. A breakdown of the schemes that have been funded this year by the Inner South Area Panel is attached as Appendix 1.

3.1.2 Environmental Clean Up Campaigns

The Estate Caretaking Team from AVHL have provided resources to assist with a number of clean up campaigns including the Manor Farms, Cottingley and Cardinals and have provided skips for local residents groups as part of a number of local clean up campaigns.

Over the last 12 months the AVHL Environmental Caretaking team have removed over 1,000 metric tonnes of rubbish and recycled 79% of this total.

As part of their regular estate inspections they have collected 318 fridges, 526 TV's and 334 car tyres that have been fly tipped.

3.1.3 Joint Working With The Police

Since the introduction of the new local based anti social behaviour teams in April last year, AVHL have had the opportunity to influence the deployment of police resources through the NPT's. The locally based ASB teams are managed by a Manager employed by the ALMO who manages staff from LCC, Police, Victim Support, Arson Task Force and the noise nuisance team through matrix management arrangements.

Through the local Tasking Meetings AVHL, along with a full range of service partners, we are able to influence PCSO resources as joint funding has been provided through the Housing Revenue Account.

3.1.4 Children's Services

Local housing staff have undertaken joint awareness training with staff from the local children's centres around safeguarding and vulnerability. We are in the process of developing a series of welfare benefit advice sessions which will be delivered to all children's centres across AVHL in preparation of the welfare reforms.

As part of the work we are undertaking to prepare for the impact of the welfare reforms we are undertaking a piece of work to map out our customer base to understand the demographics within our properties rather than relying on tenant data alone. This information, when available, will assist Children's Services to project future pressures on school places within geographical localities.

In order to assist with the corporate priority to reduce the number of looked after children the ALMO's have set aside resources within their individual Capital programmes to provide an element of joint funding if required to facilitate building alterations to avoid placing children into the care of the local authority.

In Middleton we have agreed to jointly fund the building of an extension to assist Children's Services in locating three looked after children within the extended family.

We have also identified an ALMO property that can be developed into a small children's home and are working with Children's Services to develop these proposals through joint funding.

3.1.5 Older Peoples Housing Services

AVHL manages a total of 1932 units of sheltered accommodation, of which nearly 400 are situated within the Inner South Area Committee boundary.

In order to ensure that the service provision is delivered based on individual need individual Support Plans are undertaken on a regular basis to change the service provision, or bring in additional support providers, dependent on the needs of the customer.

Within all sheltered schemes a replacement programme of the current Care Ring system is being undertaken, with potential to include assistive technology through Telecare to increase the provision of independent living rather than taking up hospital bed spaces.

AVHL is currently looking to develop a scheme with the NHS to commission a small number of bed spaces which will be available on a short term basis to avoid hospital bed blocking.

The older peoples supported housing service that is provided to sheltered properties has recently been externally inspected and was awarded a 5 'A' rating which is the highest possible rating. There are currently only 15 organisations nationally that have been awarded a similar rating.

In addition to the service that is provided within the sheltered schemes across AVHL we have introduced a cross tenure floating support service so that individuals can purchase these services, on a flexible basis to meet customer demands.

In order to allow existing residents to remain in their current homes, and avoid relocating, AVHL has spend approx £2m this year delivering aids and adaptations work.

3.1.6 Community Payback

Last year AVHL commissioned West Yorkshire Probation Trust to deliver a Community Payback scheme for AVHL. The scheme delivered 16,000 hours of activity which is commissioned through our existing resources would have cost £176k.

It is proposed to commission a further scheme in 2012/13 which will deliver 14,000 hours of activity.

3.1.7 Employment Initiatives

During the last year AVHL ran a Future Jobs Fund programme and delivered 37 placements. Whilst the national average of placements remaining in work after 6mths is around 50% the average in Leeds is approx 61% with the success rate for AVHL is 84%.

Of the 37 placements facilitated by AVHL, 15 have obtained full time employment within the ALMO's/LCC.

AVHL is fully engaged with the current Youth Inspire scheme and has taken on 3 placements with more opportunities being developed.

In addition to the above AVHL has entered into a partnership with Job Centre Plus and have formally seconded a member of their staff to work alongside our Benefit Advisors and Financial Inclusion Officer.

Since the partnership began there have been a number of positive outcomes such as;

- Twice yearly contact with 3,600 households who have made contact for benefit advice.
- 208 people have moved into paid employment
- 28 people helped into voluntary work to gain employment experience
- Over 400 tenants have moved into further education or college courses.
- Over 5,000 face to face enquiries

3.1.8 Energy Efficiency

In addition to the schemes that are delivered through the Capital programme AVHL has just secured over £1m through a partnership with Eggborough Power Station to reduce our carbon footprint.

The scheme in Hunslet will involve a comprehensive package of works to 220 properties to reduce their carbon footprint and increase energy efficiency.

AVHL is working with Yorkshire Energy Services, who are delivering the Wrap Up Leeds scheme, to facilitate loft and cavity wall insulation free for owner occupiers.

3.2 **Operational Performance**

3.2.1 Repairs and Maintenance

Since the introduction of the new repairs and maintenance services, which was introduced in April 2011, this is the main area for service failure and tenant dissatisfaction.

While vast improvements have been made to both contractor performance and telephony response times, there is further work required to reach the expected levels of performance and customer satisfaction.

The level of poor performance being delivered by Morrison has been escalated to the national Chief Executive of the company and penalties, within the terms of the contract, are being invoked.

3.2.2 Re-structure

In order to review business priorities and redirect resources within the Housing Management division a review has been undertaken.

The main drivers and outcomes of the review are;

- To create a specialist team of TMO's to support vulnerable customers
- Create a generic role for the TMO's to avoid duplication
- Create a specialist arrears team to focus on enforcement arrears activity
- Prepare for the introduction of the Welfare Reforms
- Create the role of Partnerships Manager to deliver joint working

3.2.3 Anti Social Behaviour

The new locally based ASB team are now fully integrated into the overall service provision for tenancy enforcement and ASB action and are currently reporting customer satisfaction levels of 83% following case closure.

The satisfaction level of customers being kept up to date with actions has also increased and currently stands at 87%.

Further development work is currently ongoing to integrate the noise nuisance team in order to create a holistic service to ASB intervention and enforcement.

3.2.4 Resident Engagement

There are 32 formally registered residents groups within AVHL that cover over 50% of the stock.

In addition to the above we have 4 tenants who have been elected as Board Members and we have just undertaken a recruitment process to appoint 12 members of the Scrutiny Steering Group which will become the formally recognised process to replace the formal Audit Commission inspection regime.

3.2.5 Local Ward Member Engagement

AVHL welcomes the opportunity to attend the Area Committees to present our current achievements and report performance and recognises the need for our performance data to be delivered to a Ward level.

In developing a revised Performance Management Framework it is recognised that future reporting against KPI's needs to be available at a Ward level. AVHL's Management Team have recently developed a programme of quarterly Member briefing sessions which can be increased in frequency at Members request.

3.2.6 Tenancy Management

In order to become more visible and accountable to our customers we have introduced a schedule of estate walkabouts.

Every quarter a formal walkabout will be arranged and invites sent to all service partners, local Members, RTG's and the Police. There are currently 71 quarterly walkabouts undertaken across AVHL.

In addition each TMO has a schedule of less formal monthly walkabouts to ensure that we can respond to customer demands and undertake formal visits when required through booked appointments. There are currently 201 monthly walkabouts undertaken across AVHL.

Enough flexibility has been designed into the schedule to enable urgent matters to be attended to outside the formal estate walkabout structure.

3.2.7 Staff Engagement

In order to recognise that staff are our biggest asset, we have undertaken a recent staff culture audit which has demonstrated an improvement in all 22 questions. It is also worth noting that the highest scoring areas were around;

- Focus on the customer
- High performing expectations
- Open to change
- Diversity is valued and embraced

3.2.8 Customer Satisfaction

The most recent STATUS survey that was conducted in 2010 reported overall tenant satisfaction at 69%, which was a reduction of 2% from the previous survey in 2008.

Since these results were published AVHL have been working hard to improve areas of service dissatisfaction and can report the current level of overall tenant satisfaction is over 90%

3.2.9 Capital Programme

Plans are currently being developed to mobilise this year's Capital programme which stands at £14.3m. The main areas of spend within this year's programme includes;

Work to maintain decency = £7.25m
Aids & adaptations = £1.8m
Fuel poverty & energy efficiency = £2.5m
Health and safety work = £500k
Burglary reduction initiatives = £500k
Sheltered housing investment = £1.2m

4.0 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 AVHL has a formal structure to deliver a full range of consultation and engagement activities with its tenants.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 AVHL fully complies with The Equality Act 2010 which brings together all previous equality legislation into one Act. This important piece of legislation helps to ensure that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work, or when using services. It protects people from discrimination on the basis of 9 protected characteristics: race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships and maternity and paternity.

AVHL has developed our equality priorities in line with LCC's Business Plan, LCC

Equality Improvement Priorities and AVHL's annual Business Plan for 2012/13.

Following a comprehensive consultation exercise, with both customers and staff, we have developed our top five priority equality priorities which are;

- Support
- Financial Inclusion
- Fair access
- Safety
- Listening

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The work undertaken by staff from AVHL as identified within the attached report is intended to contribute to priorities set out in the following policies;

- Vision for Leeds
- Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
- Health and Well being Priority Plan
- City Regeneration Priority Plan

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 AVHL receives its income from the HRA via the Council through a Management Fee.

Whilst services provided by AVHL are not funded through the General Fund by avoiding duplication of workload, working in partnership by sharing resources, AVHL can effectively contribute to delivering local services in communities that delivers VFM against a programme of efficiencies.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 All decisions taken by the Area Committee in relation to the delegated functions from Executive Board are not eligible for Call In.

4.5.2 There are no key or major decisions being made that would be eligible for Call In.

4.5.3 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There are no risk management implications in this report. The priorities reflected in this report are monitored through AVHL and where appropriate risk management processes followed.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The partnership approach to service delivery that has been adopted by AVHL has been well received by service partners and has improved overall customer satisfaction levels with our customers.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Area Committee are asked to note the content of the attached report and raise any queries.

Background documents¹

Aire Valley Homes Leeds Contribution to Locality Working and Involvement in Area Committees - 21st September 2011

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.