
Report of Director of Environment and Housing

Report to Housing Advisory Board

Date: 20 May 2015

Subject: Housing Leeds Priorities and Associated Indicators

Summary of main issues

1. Housing Leeds, and the ALMO's prior to being brought into the Council, have for the past two years used a set of six Priorities as their strategic performance goals. The new reporting year provides an opportunity to assess performance and review the goals, and consider re-aligning them to the emerging landscape and the delivery of a new unified service.

Recommendations

2. Housing Advisory Board is requested to:
 - Note performance against the existing six priorities and how the priorities have been used to provide a strategic focus and to manage risks
 - Consider the proposed refreshed set of priorities outlined in this paper and provide feedback as to whether these are considered to be appropriate for adoption by the service, and also
 - Consider the proposed targets for the priorities.

1. Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to share with the Board the outcomes of a review of performance for the reporting year 2014/15 against the six existing Housing Leeds priorities, set within the context of performance trends over the last 3 years and a significantly changing operating environment, and to invite views on the proposals for refreshing the set of priorities and indicators used.

2. Background information

Discussions on performance and service priorities took place with housing colleagues from the former ALMOs and the directorate prior to the 2013/14 reporting year. These discussions took into account the internal and external challenges facing the service, including the need to sustain performance during the transition from three separate organisations into one new service and improve consistency in service delivery across the city, as well as minimising the impact of Welfare changes. Six performance areas emerged from these deliberations and were set as priorities for the service in 2013/14, reflecting the desire to establish a core set of goals which focussed in on issues affecting tenants and provided a strategic focus for the new service. These priorities have continued to remain the service focus for the 2014/15 reporting year.

Each priority was supported by a lead indicator and a dashboard of supporting management information to give greater clarity of understanding of the operating context for the service and help to assess performance.

3. Main Issues

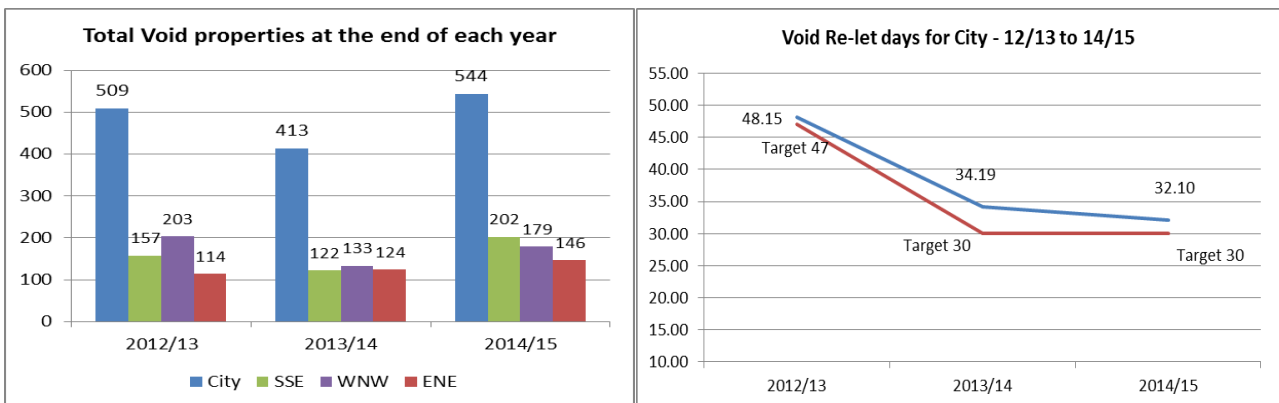
3.1. Current Indicators and their long term performance trends.

Currently the Priorities are:

- Preventing Homelessness through joint working and effective lettings.
- Reducing relet times
- Maximising rent collection
- Maximising support to tenants impacted by welfare changes
- Annual Tenancy Visits
- Maximising the value of the Capital programme in supporting the Council's key priorities.

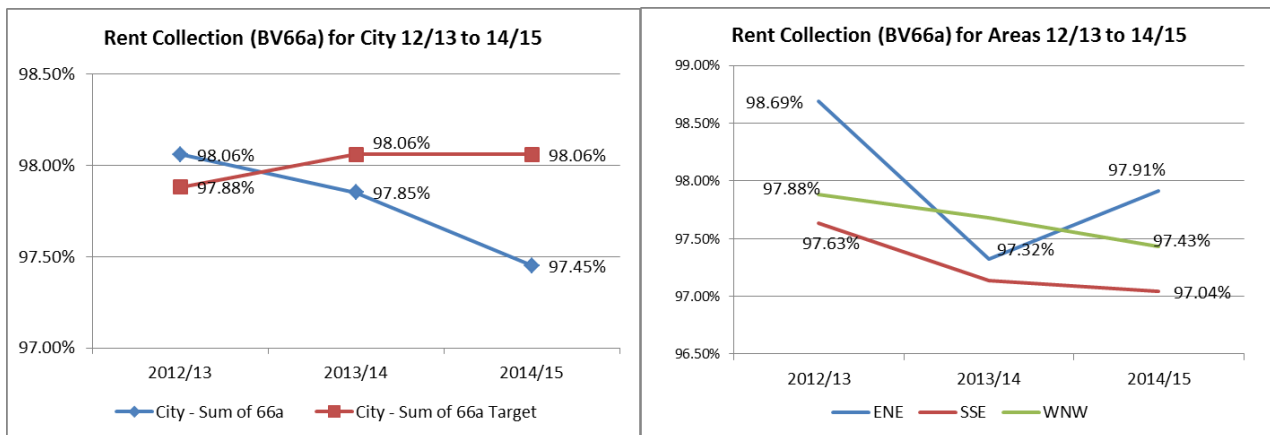
3.1.1. Homelessness: performance has held up well and the situation remains under control. Looking at the average number of homeless acceptances per month, there has been a slight increase on last year (33 from 28), although they remain well below 2012/13 levels (64). The number of preventions also continues to improve year on year, reflecting a strong prevention focus within the Housing Options service. An original concern had been that the under-occupancy rules would result in increased homeless presentations and cause significant additional hardship and vulnerability. However, these performance levels have been achieved as a result of strong joint working and an increased focus on financial inclusion within the Housing Management teams which took a more supportive approach to tenancy management and which in turn led to fewer unnecessary evictions.

3.1.2. Relet times: historically a long-standing performance issue for the ALMO's (2013 Citywide 48 days), but over the past 2 years it has been brought down considerably and was successfully within the 30 day target for 6 months of the year. The March 2014/15 figure stands at 32.10 days. The charts below show the decreasing trend for relet days and the increase in numbers of voids this year over last. This is due in the main to the fact that the volumes of voids are increasing due to PFI new build and refurbishments being brought into lettable use. Management of the contractor side has been strengthened considerably and the relationships between lettings teams, Housing Management and Voids teams are much improved.



3.1.3 Rent Collection: rent collection initially held up well during a period of uncertainty from welfare change and the upheaval of a major restructure which impacted on staffing levels. Performance was positive through much of the year and only in the last quarter of the year showing negative trends. BV66a (the headline indicator) finished at 97.45 %, below the target of 98.06% set for this year, which was based on the final outturn figure for 2013/14.

The dashboard for arrears contains additional information around arrears values, area level performance, evictions and in year collection, all of which have helped the service to develop a more rounded understanding of performance. Additional research on arrears looking into payment methods has helped to smooth out some of the previous difficulties in interpreting fluctuations, and our approach to arrears is developing in maturity and depth. The graphs below show a disappointing three year trend however with a drop from 98.06% at the end of 2012/13, to 97.85% 2013/14 and a 2014/15 outturn of 97.45%. A robust action plan is currently in development.



3.1.4 Supporting tenants impacted by welfare reform: this priority was introduced to monitor the high risk area of under occupancy. It, together with work done and reported through other forums and boards, helped to gain a greater understanding of the impact upon tenants and allow support to be directed to those in need. There is a significant overlap with the arrears dashboard as the key indicator for this is also BV66a rent collection, and also with the homelessness priority (see paragraphs 3.1.1. and 3.1.3).

3.1.5 ATV's: this priority was established in 2013/14 and was reviewed in preparation for the 2014/15 reporting year to ensure consistency in reporting (tracking has now been consistent for the past 6 months). Unfortunately, despite a huge push, the target of 100% has not been able to be met and the final figure was 84.01% against a 2013/14 year end figure of 73.12%. This was due in part to the significant changes taking place as a result of the establishment of the new service which has led to changes in staff roles and the need to bed in new teams serving patches across the city. Despite these challenges, the service has succeeded in greatly improving the volumes of ATV's done from previous years, rising from around 45% in 12/13 to 84.01% this year.

3.1.6 Capital Programme spend : Actual spend at outturn 2014/15 is £57.1m, equating to 99% of the revised available resources at period 11. Housing Leeds delivered to within (£300k) of the revised position at period 11. However, total slippage over the year equated to (£21.5m) which has now been added to the 20115/16 programme, giving a revised estimate of £90m. The 2015/16 programme will be adjusted down to a deliverable level on what can realistically be achieved within the year, which is currently estimated at £70m rising to £80m in subsequent years. However, this doesn't demonstrate fully the added value of the investment being made, or the contributions being made to wider council priorities, which was the original scope of the priority. The way in which capital schemes are funded and managed presents a challenge in terms of pulling data together into meaningful reports. With the previous decency indicator no longer reported there is also a need to develop new indicators that will help to capture and report on stock condition and the overall effectiveness of the capital programme.

3.2. Developing a Rounded View of Performance and Impact/Outcomes

In order to deliver a rounded view of service performance and measure the impact this is having on wider issues and council priorities, it has been necessary to review the existing priorities and associated indicators and consider where there may be gaps or need for change. The outcomes of the STAR survey which gives us a range of intelligence based on tenant feedback is also being used to inform service developments (a separate report is on the HAB agenda). This paper sets out some proposals based on the outcomes of this review.

A strategic set of indicators does need to be selective and not all elements can be included. However, based on current performance and future service challenges, an attempt has been made to put forward a revised suite of priorities that provide a renewed focus for the service, together with some associated indicators and targets. These are set out in 3.3. and 3.4 below.

3.3. Suggestions for revised priorities and new or revised indicators for 2015/16

3.3.1. Priority One: Environmental Investment

Headline indicator : Investment activity and spend achieved.

This was confirmed as a high priority for tenants in the STAR survey and reflects our commitment to improving environmental conditions for tenants. The dashboard could contain details of the Environmental Improvement Fund activities, completed and upcoming, and the HAP funding being spent. It could be presented by ward or by area, by numbers and types of outcomes.

3.3.2. Priority Two: Rent and Benefits.

Headline indicator of BV66a (rent collection).

Reflecting the continuing need to provide proactive financial support to tenants to mitigate the effects of welfare change and to and bed in good practice and build successful strategies. The dashboard could include arrears balances by benefit strands, including under-occupancy cases, Housing Benefit numbers, and ultimately Universal Credit.

(This merges the current Rent Arrears and Welfare change priorities as there is significant overlap.)

3.3.3. Priority Three: Housing People

Headline indicator BV212 (relet days).

Recognising the need to ensure that our Housing People approaches and processes are delivering the right outcomes, including prevention of homelessness and ensuring tenants' needs for adaptations are met, housing registrations, efficient void management and an effective lettings process. The dashboard could highlight rent loss as an efficiency driver, as well as number of void properties and relet performance, broken down between contractors and lettings. It could also include satisfaction with new properties and numbers of refusals as qualitative indicators, as well as performance measures around our homeless prevention and sustainability strategies.

3.3.4. Priority Four: Repairs right first time.

Headline indicator: % repairs right first time.

STAR has reminded us of the importance of repairs, but also highlighted that 'right first time' is a strong driver of satisfaction for tenants. Data permitting this could be broken down by contractor, area, or priority code or trade. This dashboard should include repairs satisfaction with measures coming from the repairs satisfaction survey to be carried out by the contact centre, once available.

3.3.5. Priority Five: Capital programme effectiveness.

Headline indicator: tbc

Recognising the need not only to measure capital spend against programme targets, but to widen the picture to include outcomes and impact. Through a review of the data and a reworking of what is extracted from the asset management solutions it should be possible to report capital works by element, and by area in terms of both output and spend. The dashboard could include - number of properties and type of work, number of schemes / project planned and spend profile. If a needs based assessment of properties and tenants is taken then the capital programme can tie in more closely to the wider Council Priorities and it may also assist in providing a high level indication of stock condition and investment.

3.3.6 Priority Six: Knowing Our Tenants

Headline indicator: % Annual Home Visits carried out.

This priority is being suggested in response to the outcomes of the STAR findings which pointed to the need to improve communications with tenants and to act on their feedback. It also builds on the work already started to improve tenant involvement through our work with tenants groups and HAPs. This dashboard could include a range of measures that would show the amount of contact with tenants, and for what reasons such as complaints, disrepair claims, enquiries, visits (including AHVs), calls, face to face visits, and include contact centre performance in terms of call handling. Work could be done to look at certain vulnerable age groupings ie isolated elderly, or young tenants. It could also show numbers and age of tenants involved / engaged and incorporate satisfaction from the housing office satisfaction surveys.

3.4. Recommended Targets for Priorities

Priority	Title	Headline indicator	14/15 Year end actual	Proposed Target	Previous target
1	Environmental Investment	tbc	n/a	tbc	tbc
2	Rents and Benefits	Rents	97.44%	98%	98.06%
3	Housing People	Relet days	32.10 days	30 days	30 days
4	Repairs right first time	Right First Time	87.77%	90%*	95%
5	Capital Programme Effectiveness	tbc	n/a	tbc	tbc
6	Listening & Acting	AHV	84.01%	100%	100%

* 90% is target agreed with contractors.

3.5. Consultation and Engagement

This is an information report and as such does not need to be consulted on with the public. However all performance information is published on the council's website and includes the outcomes of consultation and engagement with tenants to gauge their satisfaction with the Housing service and to provide feedback about how the service may be improved. Recent consultation outcomes have been used to inform the content of this report.

3.6. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

This is an information report for consideration by the Board and is not requesting a decision, so it is not necessary to conduct an equality impact assessment. However, some of the data provided and performance areas considered link to wider issues of equality and diversity and cohesion and integration, and there may be occasions when the Board will want to look more closely at these issues, and may request further information.

3.7. Council policies and City Priorities

This report provides an update on performance in relation to the delivery of an effective Housing service and suggests ways in which we may continue to monitor and assess performance. It does include progress against particular council and city priorities in line with the council's performance management framework.

3.8. Resources and Value for money

There are no specific resource implications from this report, although some performance indicators relate to financial and other value for money aspects.

3.9. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

All performance information is publicly available and is published on the council website. This report is an information update providing Housing Advisory Board with a summary of the Strategic Priorities within its remit and as such is not subject to call in.

3.10. Risk Management

There is a comprehensive risk management process in the Council to monitor and manage key risks. This links closely to performance management. The proposals for refreshing priorities and indicators outlined in this report are designed to support the management of performance and risk and help to secure the delivery of a high quality Housing service to Leeds tenants.

4. Conclusions

This report shows that the service has in broad terms sustained performance during a significant period of internal change and in externally challenging circumstances, and that the six priorities have given a strategic focus to the service and helped to manage performance and risk effectively. The report recognises the strengths in performance and areas for further attention, and goes on to propose a refreshed and refocused set of priorities and associated indicators/management information to provide renewed focus for the service for the next two years.

5. Recommendations

HAB members are recommended to:

- Note performance against the existing six priorities and how the priorities have been used to provide a strategic focus and to manage risks
- Consider the proposed refreshed set of priorities outlined in this paper and provide feedback as to whether these are considered to be appropriate for adoption by the service, and also
- Consider the proposed targets for the priorities.

Background documents: 2014/15 Housing Leeds priority dashboards

Priority 1: homelessness (housing support)

Priority 2: void dwellings (relets)

Priority 3: maximise rent collection

Priority 4: welfare change

Priority 5: annual tenancy visits

(Priority 6 Capital programme spend, there is no dashboard – this priority is covered by separate report which is covered elsewhere on the HAB agenda)