

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Monday, 16 March 2020

6.00 pm

Committee Room 1, City Hall

Membership:	Councillors Gary Hewson (Chair), Pat Vaughan (Vice-Chair), Liz Bushell, Christopher Reid, Edmund Strengiel and Loraine Woolley
Substitute member(s):	Councillors Biff Bean and Susie Parry
Lincoln Tenants Panel member(s):	Mick Barber (Chair of LTP), Steven Bearder (Member of LTP), Debbie Rousseau (Member of LTP) and Sheila Watkinson (Member of LTP)
Officers attending:	Joanne Crookes, Democratic Services, Yvonne Fox, Chris Morton and Daren Turner

A G E N D A

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1. Confirmation of Minutes - 27 January 2020	3 - 8
2. Declarations of Interest	
Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
3. LTP Matters	
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Present: Councillors Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*), Liz Bushell, Christopher Reid, Edmund Strengiel, Pat Vaughan and Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: None.

Also in Attendance: Mick Barber (Chair of LTP), Steven Bearder (Member of LTP), Debbie Rousseau (Member of LTP) and Sheila Watkinson (Member of LTP)

61. Confirmation of Minutes - 4 November 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019 be confirmed.

62. Matters Arising

Ermine A46 Pollution

Daren Turner, Strategic Director Housing and Investment gave an update on minute number 52 in relation to the complaints received about pollution on the A46 bypass where trees had been removed. He advised that he had spoken with the Highways Manager for the area who had confirmed that work would be undertaken on the A46/A15 junction on the roundabout to include additional lanes. The Highways Officer had offered to attend a future meeting of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee to answer any questions, however the committee did not feel that it was necessary at this time.

The environmental impact had been considered by the Pollution Control Officer who had advised that although pollution levels were higher than he would like to see they still remained within the parameters. Acoustic fences had been installed at the properties which backed on to the road to reduce the noise. Also the shrubs that had been removed would not have made a difference to noise levels, however, the psychological impact of greenery could be that people perceived it to be less noisy.

Mick Barber the Chair of LTP advised that some resident involvement work was being undertaken in the area affected and he would like to speak to residents on this matter to find out their views. He would report back to the next meeting of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee.

Housing Officers

The Chair referred to minute number 52 and advised that a list of the Housing Officers and their patches had been circulated to all members. Within a month another list had been circulated with changes, there needed to be more stability with Housing Officers.

Notice Boards

Daren Turner, Strategic Director of Housing and Investment referred to minute number 52 and advised that a range of options had been looked at. There were

750 blocks of flats, to place a notice board in each block it would cost £48,600 for the noticeboards plus labour to install them, it would cost a total of £78,000. Another option was to install 1 noticeboard outside each block of flats.

The Chair commented that he thought that the noticeboards should go ahead as they could include details of Housing Officers, fire procedures and cleaning records.

63. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

64. LTP Matters (Verbal Report)

Mick Barber, Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel gave the following update:

Noticeboards

- Noticeboards had been discussed at the Allocations and Tenants meetings.
- There was an average of 680 noticeboards needed.
- The Green paper stated the information on fire points would be required but they were still waiting for the white paper to be published.
- There was currently no information available for fire points.
- LTP would like to run a pilot notice board in the Cannon Street area.
- The Council's Caretakers could install the noticeboards which would reduce labour costs.
- Residents felt that these should have been installed a while ago.
- The communal areas in the flats needed to be cleared.

Housing Officers

- LTP would like to see a breakdown of which Housing Officer covered which area and what they were responsible for.

Keeley Johnson, Tenancy Services Manager responded that there had been a number of Housing Officer staffing issues recently including long term sickness, secondments and maternity leave. The Housing Officers did provide a consistently good service. The team would be back up to full resources shortly.

Lincoln Tenants Panel

- Jo Crookes, Customer Services Manager had been invited to attend the next LTP meeting regarding the call answering times.
- The panel would be supporting a change in the target for the call answering time.
- The Moving Policy would be going to the next LTP meeting.

65. Update on Housing Officers - Chair of Lincoln Tenant's Panel (Verbal Report)

This item was discussed under LTP matters.

66. Tenancy Sustainment (Verbal Report)

Keeley Johnson, Tenancy Services Manager gave a verbal update on Tenancy Sustainment and raised the following main points:

- Tenancy Sustainment was a key priority for the authority.
- With the continued changes to the welfare system it was important to help tenants sustain their tenancy.
- The Council had an eviction protocol which meant that eviction was only used as a very last resort.
- New tenants would be visited within the first week of moving into a property. This would provide an opportunity to welcome the tenant and provide advice on sustaining their tenancy.
- A vulnerability survey would take place at the beginning of the tenancy.
- Officers were looking at resources to see if they could be allocated to set up a separate Tenancy Sustainment Team.
- The Tenancy Sustainment Team would specialise in providing advice on benefits etc and assist people with sustaining their tenancy.

The committee discussed the verbal update and raised the following main points:

Comment: The new systems were working as the Housing Appeal Panel were being held much less often than previously.

Response: Issues were being addressed before they reached a point where they needed to go to a Housing Appeals Panel.

Question: Why was helping people to downsize not a priority?

Response: It was a priority, Officers tried to approach this in a holistic way which included visiting tenants and explaining the benefits of moving, however, people could not be made to move if they did not want to.

Question: What support was available for people who wanted to downsize?

Response: Housing Officers, Allocations and Welfare Officers could all provide advice and support to those tenants who wanted to downsize.

Question: Would tenants still be charged spare room subsidy if they proved that they were actively trying to move house?

Response: It was clear in legislation that there would be a reduction in Housing Benefit if there was one or more spare room. Tenants could make an application for Discretionary Housing Payments.

Question: When were prospective tenants taken through the tenancy agreement?

Response: Currently they received a copy of the Tenancy Agreement when they signed up. However this was not ideal and was being changed so that they received a copy of the Tenancy Agreement when they were allocated a property. They would then have time to read it between allocation and sign up.

Question: How many Housing Assistant posts were there?

Response: There were 3 posts.

Question: Could more visits take place?

Response: Housing Officers were regularly out on the Estates, however, tenants had the right to peaceful enjoyment of their homes.

The Strategic Director of Housing and Investment explained that there was currently a lot of work being undertaken to help tenants sustain their tenancies. Officers were considering setting up workshops for new tenants to provide support and to signpost tenants to access services. The aim was to provide every opportunity to assist tenants.

The Tenancy Services Manager added that nationally there had been large cuts to the advice and support sector. The Council wanted to be approachable, empathetic and to help tenants keep their tenancies.

The Chair commented that it was important to measure how well the Authority was achieving in this area and suggested that some Performance Indicators be included in next year's targets.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

67. Housing Planned Works (Verbal Report)

The Chair explained that the Committee had previously asked for the planned works for the forthcoming year be circulated to all members for information. He confirmed that members had received this information and asked why the planned works had been changed since the beginning of the year?

Kevin Bowring, Maintenance and Investment Manager presented the data from the Asset Management System. He gave an example of kitchen and bathroom installations and explained that the data dealt with 'on average' figures assuming that all kitchens and bathrooms needed to be replaced after 20 years. He further explained that this may not be the case as on inspection the kitchens or bathrooms may not need to be replaced if they had been looked after. Also, throughout the year tenants would report faults with their kitchen or bathroom, the process was that an inspection would take place and they would either be repaired or if necessary replaced which would be added to the planned works. The planned works would be constantly updated throughout the year.

The Chair commented that the budget had been significantly reduced since the beginning of the year and asked why the money had been taken out of the planned works budget?

The Assistant Director of Housing explained that the initial planned works programme was set at the beginning of the year, it was then tweaked and altered throughout the year. He explained that money would be reallocated if there was any left in the budget due to a number of reasons. He advised that this could be due to the work that was expected to be completed at the beginning of the year but was then found to not be needed which meant there was money left over. He clarified that this did not mean that less work was being completed, as the money was only reallocated once all of the necessary work had been completed.

RESOLVED that the verbal report be noted.

68. Work Programme Update 2019/20

The Chair

- a. presented the work programme for the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee for 2019/20 as detailed at Appendix A of the report.

- b. advised that this was an opportunity for committee to suggest other items to be included on the work programme.

The Chair requested that the following reports be scheduled into the work programme:

- Tenancy Agreement update
- A breakdown in expenditure between repairs/maintenance and Management.

RESOLVED that

1. the work programme be noted.
2. the following reports be scheduled into the work programme
 - Tenancy Agreement update
 - A breakdown in expenditure between repairs/maintenance and Management

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SUBJECT:	PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 3 – 2019/20
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	YVONNE FOX – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee with an end of quarter report on Performance Indicators for the third quarter of year 2019/20 (October 2019 – December 2019). See Appendix A.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report combines all performance relevant to Housing Landlord issues.

2.2 In total there are 21 measures and of these, 13 are on or exceeding targets for the year (year-end), 7 have not met the targets set and 1 does not have a required target. Of the 7 measures that are not currently on target, 5 of these, have improved since quarter two.

3. Background

3.1 Over the last ten years the Council has been working with the Lincoln Tenants Panel to improve external scrutiny and to meet the standards implemented by the Tenant Services Authority.

3.2 From 1 April 2010 all social landlords were required to have local offers in place alongside the national standards as set out in the new Regulatory Framework for Social Housing. The Framework was amended with effect from April 2012 but the principles remain the same.

4. Main Body of Report

4.1 Appendix A attempts to simplify the overall analysis by listing performance on a service functional basis (rents, repairs etc.) and then showing the source of the indicator (reason).

4.2 For comparison purposes each indicator shows performance for the last year, target for current year (where applicable) and progress made in the current year.

4.3 Appendix A shows which targets have been met and those where we have not achieved our target. There are 13 indicators that are currently meeting or exceeding target. Particular areas to highlight are:

Arrears as a % of Rent Debit

Current tenant arrears are 2.82% or £789,473. This is a significant reduction from the previous quarter. During December we had the two rent free weeks in which we were able to collect £195,281 in rent. The team have been set targets for rent visits and calls, and management are continually monitoring performance in this area in order to further increase our income collection and reduce tenant arrears.

Average Days to Resolve ASB Cases

The average number of days to resolve an ASB case is 55.5 days (against the target of 75 days). Performance in this area has improved quarter on quarter. Although the number of days has decreased the team continue to exhaust on resources on a case by case basis.

The Tenancy Services Team have introduced a monthly ASB masterclass, where the team share best practice from cases they've dealt with, and discuss any issues arising from their current caseload. The idea behind these meetings is to expand officer's knowledge and intelligence around ASB, in order to further enhance our service to the tenants when dealing with any ASB issues.

- 4.4 The following summary provides a brief explanation of reasons where we have not achieved our targets. Particular areas to highlight are:

Average Re-Let Period – All Dwellings (Including Major Works) – (Days)

Although our void re-let times remain over target, it is worth noting that both void measures have significantly improved over the quarter. The average re-let time for general needs minor voids is now 30.3 days, compared to 34.3 days in quarter two. The average void time for all dwellings including major works is 39.7 days, compared to 44.1 at the end of September 2019. Despite this improved performance, it was the problems earlier in the financial year i.e. void contractor, sign up delays (refusals) that have made it incredibly difficult to claw the void time back anywhere close to the target.

In addition we are currently carrying out a 'deep dive' analysis of the voids process. The voids support team is now overseen by the Tenancy Services Manager and the Housing Maintenance Manager is ensuring contract compliance by our void contractor. We are critically analysing data and comparing with other authorities. Top quartile performance on voids nationally is 34 days; our target is currently 28 days.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Improve the Performance of the Council's Housing Landlord Function

There continues to be a strong commitment to improving the quality and efficiency of the service and this is a key aim in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

5.2 We are currently evaluating all the indicators to ensure that we are capturing the correct performance information for 2020/21. The current suite of indicators has not been comprehensively reviewed for several years and therefore this is an ideal opportunity to review our targets and definitions that can be meaningfully benchmarked with other comparable providers.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

No impact.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

No impact.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) No risks identified in this quarter.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Members are asked to note and comment on:

1. The current performance outcomes during the financial year 2019/20 ;
2. A commitment to continue reporting on a quarterly basis and to determine a programme to have more interim in depth reviews of service specific performance.

Is this a key decision? Yes/No

Do the exempt information categories apply? Yes/No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? Yes/No

How many appendices does the report contain? 1

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Gareth Griffiths, Housing Quality and Performance
Team Leader Telephone (01522) 873448

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LANDLORD SERVICES – PERFORMANCE 2019/20

APPENDIX A

Figures in brackets are the standalone quarterly figure.

PI	Description	Actual 18/19	Target 2019/20	19/20 Q1	19/20 Q2	19/20 Q3	19/20 Q4	Commentary
Rents								
125B	% of rent collected as a percentage of rent due	99.24%	98%	98.17%	98.04% (97.97%)	100.3% (105.9%)		Above target.
126	Arrears as a % of rent debit	2.66%	3.65%	3.19%	3.72%	2.82%		Above target.
Voids								
69	% of rent lost due to vacant dwellings	0.92%	0.90%	1.15%	1.06% (0.99%)	0.89% (0.69%)		Above target.
58	Average re-let period – General needs (excluding major works) – (days)	25.23	23 days	35.2 days	34.3 days (33.05)	30.3 days (20.7)		Below target.
61	Average re-let period – All dwellings (including major works) – (days)	30.02	28 days	42.7 days	44.1 days (45.69)	39.7 days (28.8 days)		Below target.
Allocations								
85A	% of offers accepted first time	82.50%	85%	85.31%	82.89% (80%)	84.59% (88.79%)		Below target.
Repairs								
29	% of all emergency repairs carried out within time limits	100.00%	99.5%	100%	100% (100%)	100% (100%)		On target.
32	% of all repairs carried out within time limits	98.65%	97.5%	98.86%	98.26% (97.43%)	97.67% (95.89%)		Above target.
33	Average time taken to complete repairs	7.2 days	8 days	8 days	8.6 days (8.8 days)	9.4 (11.8)		Below target.
34	Complete repairs right on first visit.	93.68%	90%	94.85%	95.04% (95.21%)	94.67% (93.82%)		Above target.
37	Repair appointments kept against appointments made (%)	96.91%	95%	97.61%	97.73% (97.83%)	97.82% (98.01%)		Above target.
41	Tenant satisfaction with repairs	96.16%	95%	98.62%	98.72% (98.86%)	97.41% (93.92%)		Above target.
Decent Homes								
50	% of non-decent homes	0.21%	0%	0.72%	0.84%	0.55%		On target for year end.
48	% of homes with valid gas safety certificate	99.94%	99.96%	100%	99.89% (99.91%)	99.86% (99.77%)		Below target.

PI	Description	Actual 18/19	Target 2019/20	19/20 Q1	19/20 Q2	19/20 Q3	19/20 Q4	Commentary
Complaints								
22	% of complaints replied to in 10 working days	88.81%	95%	85.11%	84.69% (84.31%)	87.90% (92.42%)		Below target.
ASB								
89	% of ASB cases closed that were resolved	98.25%	94%	94.81%	96.41% (97.78%)	96.23% (95.92%)		Better than target.
90	Average days to resolve ASB cases	64 days	70 days	63.7 days	56.7 days (50.8)	55.5 days (53.5 days)		Better than target.
Other								
	Expenditure against target set for year – responsive maintenance	97.2%	100%	8%	33%	45%		On target for year end.
	Expenditure against target set for year – capital programme	79.4%	100%	8.15%	25.5%	42%		On target for year end.
Customer Contact								
	% of calls answered within 90 seconds	52.1%	80%	55.35%	46.03% (37.05%)	***		Below target.
	Customer satisfaction with the overall service	86%	No target	86%	86%	86%		Biannual survey.

HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2020

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER SERVICES UPDATE REPORT
DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
LEAD OFFICER: JOANNE CROOKES, CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update members on Customer Services performance following the meeting held on 4 November 2019.
- 1.2 To present an outline of the results and responses from the 'Customer Contact' elements of the recent Citizen Panel.
- 1.3 To seek a decision on a call answering target for the new year.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 4 November 2019 the Customer Services Manager was invited to attend the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting to provide an answer to why the percentage of calls answered within 90 seconds was below target.
- 2.2 A number of reasons for this were presented and in summary these reasons included:
 - An increase in the number of calls answered
 - Staff turnover
 - Training of new staff
 - Training of existing staff to deal with Housing Solutions calls
 - An increase in the length of calls due to complexities such as Universal Credit
- 2.3 In respect of the above, the Customer Services Manager also made the following points which the committee discussed.
 - Call waiting times compare very favourably with other public sector and private sector organisations
 - There have been no formal complaints recorded about call waiting times in the previous 12 months
 - Customers are told their position in the queue and are offered a call back after 5 minutes.
 - The priority was to deal with calls thoroughly and seek full resolution, rather than answer them as quickly as possible
 - Customers are encouraged where possible to report their issues on-line. This provides a cost-effective and 24/7 option for non-emergency calls.

3. Performance

3.1 Since the November meeting we have seen an improvement in the call waiting times but the outturn remains below the target.

3.2 In November the average wait to be answered was 2 minutes and 37 seconds.

In December this reduced slightly to 2 minutes and 13 seconds; and there was a further slight improvement in January to an average wait of 2 minutes and 7 seconds.

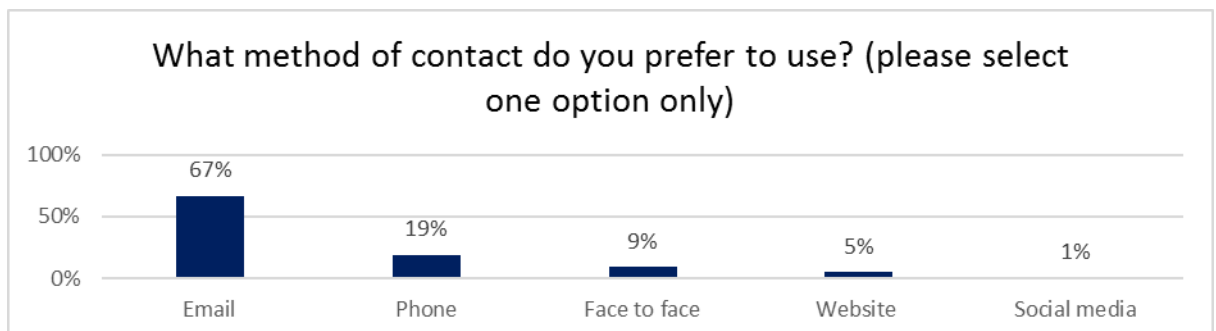
3.3 The percentage of Housing calls answered within 90 seconds reached 58.3% in December.

3.4 Customer Satisfaction levels remain high with a 96.05 % score for telephone calls and 100% for face to face visits.

4. Citizen Panel Feedback – Customer Contact

4.1 In January 2020 a Citizen Panel Survey was conducted. As part of this survey we asked questions designed to establish how important a call-answering target was to our customers.

4.2 The panel were asked which one method of contacting the council was their preference. 328 people responded to this question with the following results:



4.3 This is interesting as the panel is representative of our local population and this indicates that customers are increasingly moving towards email communication.

4.4 We asked a question specifically about call waiting times. After much consideration we decided to allow free text responses to this question so that customers felt able to express exactly what they thought was an acceptable waiting time. The question was “Our current average wait time for a call to be answered is around 3 minutes. How long would you be prepared to wait (in minutes) assuming your query was fully resolved during the call?”

4.5 92.6% of responses gave a time of 3 minutes or longer as their version of an acceptable wait, with only 7 respondents or 7.4% of the sample stating that they would be willing to wait for less than 3 minutes.

4.6 In fact if we answered calls within 5 minutes over half of responses (55%) would feel that this was reasonable.

4.7 Table showing responses.



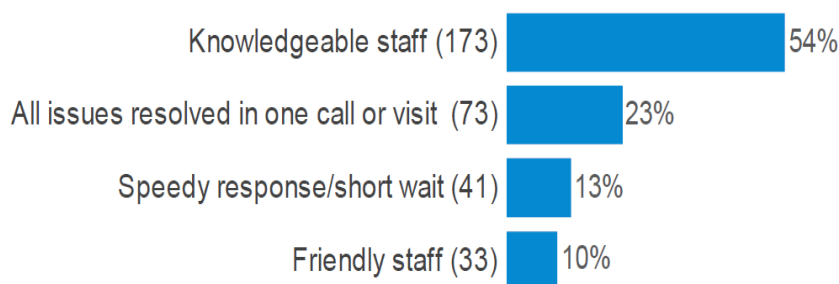
4.8 We asked respondents. How satisfied are you with the service you get from the Customer Service team when you call or visit the council?
The responses were as follows:

Very satisfied	26%	(57)
Satisfied	69%	(152)
Dissatisfied	4%	(9)
Very dissatisfied	1%	(3)

4.9 These replies show that 95% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the service directly supplied by the Customer Service Team

4.10 The final question that we posed restricted respondents to a single answer and asked: "What is the ONE thing that is most important to you when contacting the council?" Responses are at 4.9 below.

4.11 **What is the ONE thing that is most important to you when contacting the council?**



4.12 The Citizen Panel respondents were then invited to make any other comments, and these are reproduced below for your information. We have not included a

number of statements which said “All the above”.

1. But having friendly, knowledgeable staff helps!
2. Difficult to answer the question all five are important
3. And a speedy response
4. Keep up the good work. Stay positive
5. Not being left in the dark is important
6. Friendly staff, short wait and staff who know the job are needed
7. Clearly all these things are important but without knowledgeable staff the rest is window-dressing
8. Obviously you expect all personnel to be friendly and knowledgeable and then the call will be quick and efficient

5. Proposed Target 2020-2021

- 5.1 The comments from respondents to the Citizen Panel questionnaire indicate that our residents do not expect telephone calls to be answered within our current target time of 90 seconds.
- 5.2 A fast response is not the most important thing to people when they call the council. They expect knowledgeable staff and would prefer that their service request or issue is resolved in one call where possible.
- 5.3 Resolving issues can require agents to be in conversation for several minutes while other calls are waiting to be answered. However each customer can be reassured that they are getting the best possible service; that any follow-up actions are completed and relevant notes have been made.
- 5.4 Removing the target altogether would not be acceptable and would not allow us to identify problems with our level of service or report our performance to members and customers. Nor would it allow for comparison or bench-marking with other councils and organisations.
- 5.5 A reasonable, acceptable and achievable target needs to be set. In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience and Review, we propose that the target be changed to: “Calls are answered, on average, within 5 minutes”

6. Organisational Impacts

None from this report.

7. Finance

No direct implications from this report.

8. Recommendations

Members of this Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the improvement in call answering performance.

2. Note the results of the Citizen Panel and the content of this report.
3. Provide any views or comments on the relevance of a call answering waiting time target and consider the proposal for a target for calls to be answered within an average of 5 minutes.
4. Consider whether the Committee would wish to receive any further reports on this issue.

**Key Decision
Key Decision Reference
No.**

No

**Do the Exempt
Information Categories
Apply**

Call In and Urgency: Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

No

**Does the report contain
Appendices?**

No

**If Yes, how many
Appendices?**

Yes

**List of Background
Papers:**

Lead Officer:

Joanne Crookes, Customer Services Manager
Telephone 873407

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HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2020

**REPORT BY COUNCILLOR DONALD NANNESAD, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR
QUALITY HOUSING**

INTRODUCTION

This report concentrates on the most challenging area of performance within housing.

In general terms members will be aware that the Housing Strategy, as well as the 30 year business plan, is in the process of being reviewed. Members have been involved in two briefings so far which have provided valuable feedback as well as giving members the opportunity to have their say on future priorities. There will also be further opportunities for members to contribute as work on the strategy proceeds.

The year ahead is an important one for housing. Not only is the Housing Strategy being updated but this coincides with the centenary of Council Housing in Lincoln. A series of events involving tenants are planned to mark the 100 year anniversary and full details of these are currently being finalised. The very first Council house in Lincoln, on what was then known as the Wragby Road Estate, later to be renamed St Giles, was tenanted in November 1920. The changes identified through the Housing Strategy review will provide the framework for us to give an excellent service to tenants in our second 100 years.

The Housing Strategy will be supported by data obtained from the Housing LIN document, which provides evidence on the future housing needs for over 75s in the city, and from our own Housing Needs Survey, carried out in August and September. Further information has been obtained from a series of Ward Walks across the City attended by the Director and myself. Many members of council will have been involved representing their respective Wards.

The performance figures for housing for the first three quarters of the 2019-20 financial year show that three of the 16 strategic measures are below target. All three measures below target have shown an improvement in the third quarter. Of the more specific data set for housing services, in which there are 20 measures, 16 are on or above target. Of the four showing as red one relates to customer services and is considered in another portfolio.

The performance data is attached as appendices to this report.

A number of challenges lie ahead amongst them the issues of homelessness, Climate Change, the need to increase our housing stock, and dealing with the effects of Universal Credit .

Finally I would like to thank the Director Daren Turner, the three Assistant Directors of housing, Yvonne Fox, Matt Hillman and Andrew McNeil, and staff at all levels throughout the Housing department for their hard work over the 12 months in what continues to be challenging circumstances. Many of the performance figures are excellent and that is down to the effort put in by the workforce.

HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness continues to be a significant issue in Lincoln as in many towns and cities across the country.

Rough sleepers are just the most visible aspect of this. The official 2019 annual count undertaken on 8 November identified 27 rough sleepers which is very similar to the figures for 2018 (26) and 2017 (28).

The opening of the Nomad Trust's new premises at the YMCA premises on St Rumbold Street is a welcome addition to the provision of emergency accommodation but there is a need to increase the amount of "move on" accommodation available to allow those staying at Nomad and similar accommodation to progress.

A number of different schemes have received funding to help reduce the homelessness issue. The City Council is the lead organisation for the ACTion Lincs project which provides a housing first approach to dealing with homelessness accompanied by support. Over 100 homeless people across the county have been assisted by this scheme. Our own Rough Sleeper Project team housed 73 people in its first year and assisted 146 people with mental health issues.

Homelessness, however, remains a real problem for the city despite all the efforts of ourselves and other organisations such as the YMCA, P3, Framework, LEAP and Addaction who work in partnership with us. The move by Lincolnshire County Council to cut £1 million from its £3 million a year housing related support budget will only make the situation worse as regards homelessness.

An indication of the problem is that a total of 356 people approached the Council as homeless in the first six months of 2019-20.

We have been working to reduce the number of homeless individuals and families placed in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation. This has on occasion resulted in households being placed out of Lincoln which is something we are working to avoid where possible. In the period between 1 January and 31 December 2019 a total of 299 households were placed in temporary accommodation. This is a high number but we have been able to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by utilising former council homes bought under the "purchase and repair" scheme. The average time spent in temporary accommodation was 30.6 days.

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Rent arrears as of the end of Quarter Three were £107,000 above the same point last year and 2.82% as a percentage of the debit. This is 0.83% better than the target of 3.65%. There has been an increase of 641 tenants claiming Universal Credit (UC) in the past 12 months which is having a significant impact on arrears. An Income Officer has been recruited until the end of this month to assist specifically with income collection and mitigate the impact of Universal Credit.

In my report last year I acknowledged that more work needed to be done with tenants to ensure that they are in the best place to maintain their tenancy and have effective

support in place to assist them to do this. As a result a number of measures have since been implemented.

A UC Interview and claim procedure has been implemented which ensures all UC claimants are contacted within three days of making their claim. This new interview ensures a payment arrangement is made as soon as a claim is made and ensures tenants are given sufficient knowledge on UC and the impact this will have on their rent account. Tenancy Services also received specialised UC training which gives Housing Officers the knowledge to manage UC claims on their own patches. Previously this was only done by three officers. The Housing Assistants are now also assisting with arrears collection and are having success managing low level arrears in their respective teams.

Our current rent arrears procedures are being reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and a Universal Housing consultant will also be making improvements to the current housing management system. This will mean Housing Officers have more capacity to manage the increasingly complex cases they are facing.

Tenancy services are currently achieving 100.32% in year rent collection rate against the target of 98% and continue to prioritise income collection and a significant emphasis has been placed on mitigating the impact of Universal Credit. This has been achieved whilst almost halving the number of evictions carried out compared to the previous year.

Tenancy Services continues to strive to maintain and improve on the high standards of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) service delivery which resulted in being awarded Housemark Accreditation. The figures to the end of Quarter 3 show that the average length of time to resolve ASB cases was 55.5 days (target 70 days). In addition 96.23% of cases that were closed were resolved (target 94%).

NEW BUILD/ALLOCATIONS

The addition of 172 new Council homes during 2018-19 was the most significant increase in the number of Council houses in Lincoln in a 12 month period for over 40 years. We are continuing this progress with work underway on building the 70-bed extra care unit on the site of the former De Wint Court sheltered housing scheme. This project, funded in part by contributions from both Homes England and Lincolnshire County Council is the first of its type built by the City Council and will help address the shortfall in this type of accommodation within Lincoln that is identified in the Housing LIN report which provided data on the accommodation needs for older people (over 75s) across Greater Lincolnshire.

The Council is in the process of putting together a programme of future building. Work on developing the former Markham House site on St Giles commenced last month and a plan for a mix of shared ownership and council rented properties on land off Rookery Lane is being finalised. De Wint Court is scheduled to be completed in summer 2021 and the Markham House site in late 2020. Approval has been given for the work needed to provide access to the Queen Elizabeth Road site which has outline permission for 325 new homes. The current intention is that the housing on this site will be a mix of tenures. We have also been buying properties, in the main former

Council houses, under the purchase and repair scheme which has enabled the authority to add further to our housing stock.

There remains a significant demand for Council housing within the City and it is important to continue to make progress building and acquiring additional properties. We lose between 50 and 60 homes a year through Right to Buy which not only has an effect on the number of City Council properties available but also on the rental income into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). In the current year the number of properties sold to date totals 44, the full year effect of income loss is in excess of £190k pa. Another effect of Right to Buy is that our housing stock is now predominantly one and two-bed properties as many of the three and four bed properties, with the discount offered, have been sold over the years.

The number of live applications for Council properties at the end of Quarter 3 was 1,477. Since the end of May 2019 the number of applications awaiting assessment or requiring validation documents has been reduced dramatically. At 31st May 2019 this total was 475 but by the end of Quarter 3 this was down to 46. The downward trend is testament to the hard work of the Housing Solutions team.

Due to a shortage of affordable housing in the city, the Housing Solutions Team are working with the Private Rented Sector landlords to encourage them to offer their properties to applicants at a reasonable rental level and support is offered to the landlords with managing the tenancies so that it encourages them to accept applicants that may need that additional support.

The % of offers of tenancy which have been accepted first time has considerably improved. In April 2018 just 61.54% of tenancy offers were accepted first time – which meant almost 40% were not. At the end of Quarter 3 of the current financial year 84.59% of offers were accepted first time which is above the target of 80%.

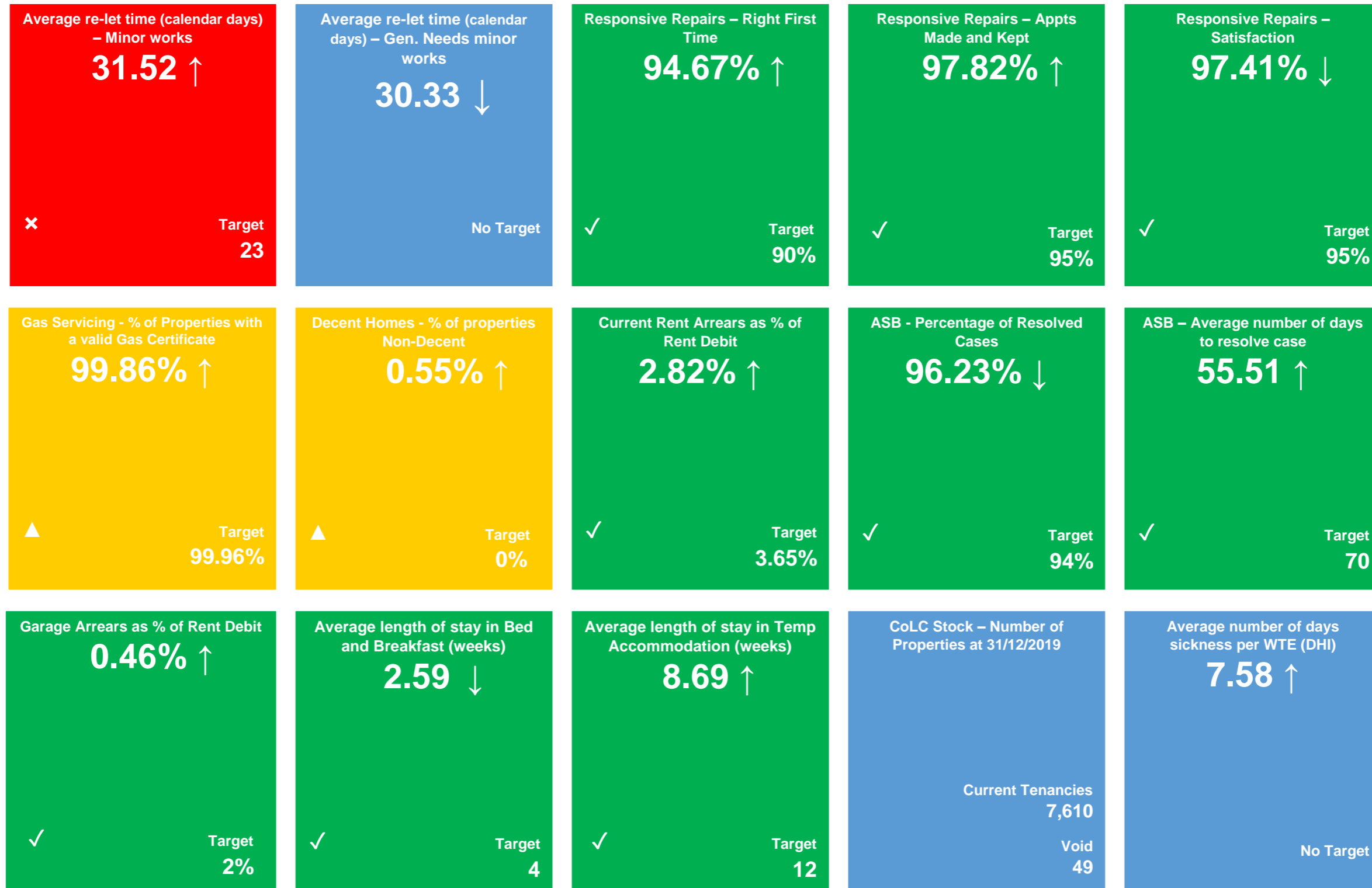
CONCLUSION

Vision 2020, the Council's strategic plan, sets out measures of success for the quality housing portfolio in relation to the remit of this committee. These include i) Increasing the availability and provision of housing in Lincoln; ii) Improving the quality of both public sector and private sector homes; iii) Increasing the availability of supported housing for older people with high levels of need. This report, I believe, shows we continue to make progress in achieving these outcomes.

Donald Nannestad
Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

City of Lincoln Council Performance Dashboard – April to December 2019

Colour = Cumulative performance (Tick/Green = On Target, Triangle/Orange = Near to Target, Cross/Red = Not on Target, Blue = No Target)
 Arrows = comparison against previous month's monthly performance (↑ = Improved, ↓ = Declined, ↔ = Remained the same)



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Housing Scrutiny Performance Dashboard – April to December 2019

Colour = Cumulative performance (Tick/Green = On Target, Triangle/Orange = Near to Target, Cross/Red = Not on Target, Blue = No Target)
 Arrows = comparison against previous month's monthly performance (↑= Improved, ↓= Declined, ↔ = Remained the same)



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GREEN – TARGET MET

AMBER – CLOSE TO TARGET

RED – TARGET NOT MET

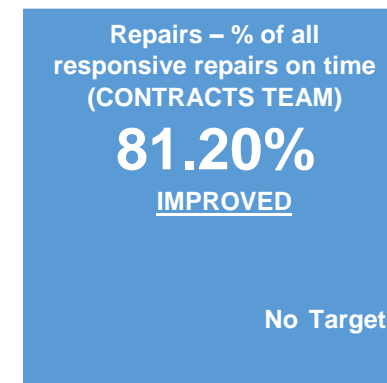
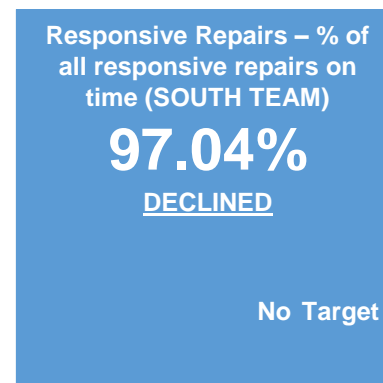
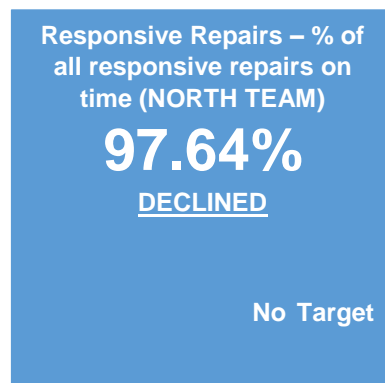
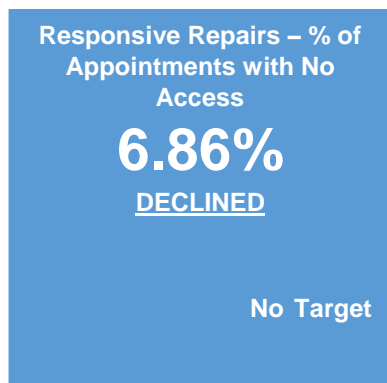
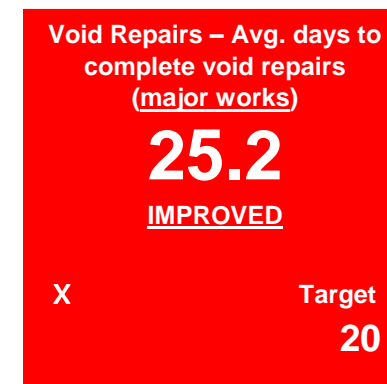
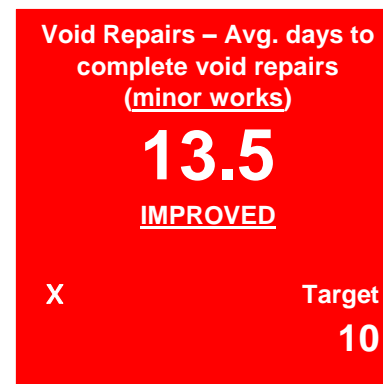
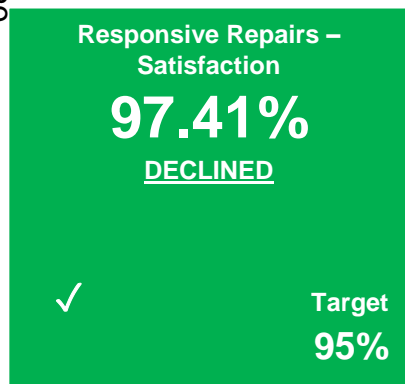
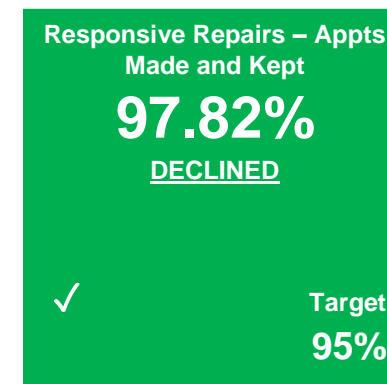
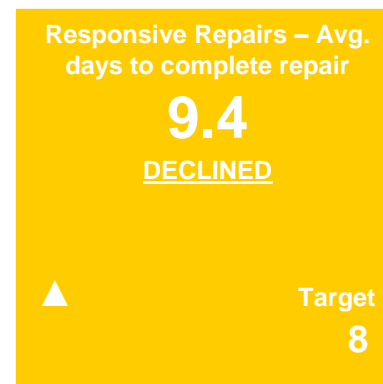
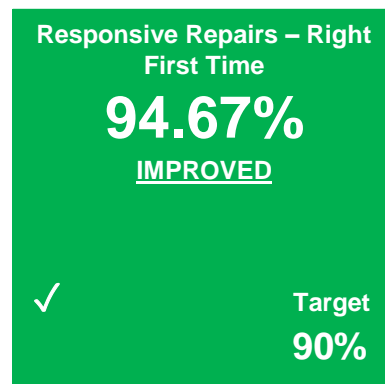
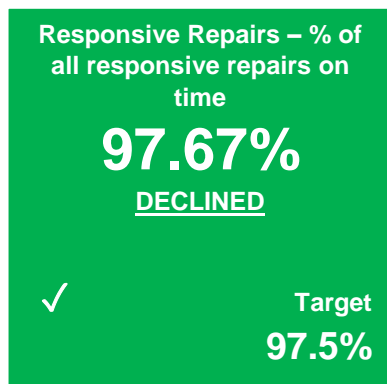
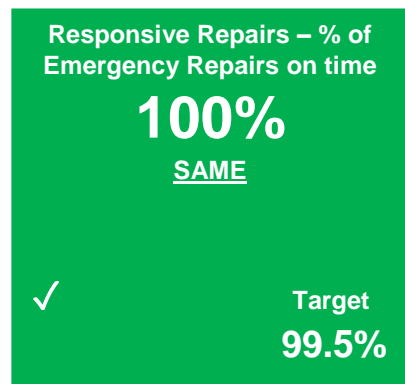
BLUE – NO TARGET

Housing Repairs Service Performance Dashboard – April to December 2019

Colour = Cumulative performance (Tick/Green = On Target, Triangle/Orange = Near to Target, Cross/Red = Not on Target, Blue = No Target)

Comparison against previous month's monthly performance (Improved, Declined, Remained the same)

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Tenancy Services Performance Dashboard – April to December 2019

Colour = Cumulative performance (Tick/Green = On Target, Triangle/Orange = Near to Target, Cross/Red = Not on Target, Blue = No Target)
 Arrows = comparison against previous month's monthly performance (↑= Improved, ↓= Declined, ↔ = Remained the same)



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HOUSING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**16 MARCH 2020**

SUBJECT: DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE 2020/21

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

LEAD OFFICER: CLAIRE TURNER, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present Members with the draft work programme for 2020/21 (Appendix A).

2. Background

2.1 The draft work programme for 2020/21 is provided for information to ensure members are aware of the forthcoming business at future meetings of the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee. The work programme is regularly updated in consultation with the chair of the committee and chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel.

2.2 The work programme includes those areas for scrutiny linked to the strategic priorities of the Council and housing matters, this was to ensure that the work of this committee is relevant and proportionate.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That Members agree the work programme and recommend any necessary amendments.

Access to Information:

Does the report contain exempt information, which would prejudice the public interest requirement if it was publicised?

No

Key Decision

No

Do the Exempt Information Categories Apply

No

Call In and Urgency: Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

No

Does the report contain Appendices?

Yes

If Yes, how many Appendices?

1

Lead Officer:

Claire Turner, Democratic Services Officer
Telephone 873619

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Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2012/21**June 2020**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Quarter 4 2019/20 – Performance Summary	Yvonne Fox	This will be a summary report.
Expenditure Breakdown between Repairs/Maintenance and Management	Colleen Warren	Requested by Chair
Supported Housing Review	Clive Thomasson	Agreed at Executive 22 July 2019 – 6 month review
Work Programme Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report

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August 2020

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Quarter 1 (2020/21) – Performance Report	Yvonne Fox	Quarterly Report
Work Programme Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report

November 2020

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Quarter 2 (2020/21) – Performance and Finance Report	Yvonne Fox	Quarterly report
Work Programme Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Annual Report to Tenants	Chris Morton	

January 2021

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report

March 2021

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Housing Portfolio Holder	Councillor Nannestad	Annual Report
Quarter 3 (2020/21) – Performance Report	Yvonne Fox	Quarterly report
Work Programme Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report

Unscheduled Items

- Tenancy Breakdown