

SUBJECT:	PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 4 – 2021/22
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	GARETH GRIFFITHS QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE OFFICER.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee with a quarter four report on Performance Indicators for the 2021/22 financial year (April 2021 – March 2022). 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, against agreed targets, 10 are on or exceeding targets for the year (year-end), 10 have not met the normal targets set. Of the 10 measures that did not meet target, 3 of these were within 5% tolerance of their respective targets (Amber rating), One measure does not have a target (Complaints replied to in line with corporate policy).

3. Background

- 3.1 Over the last twelve 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. Particular areas to highlight are:

% of Rent Collected as a Percentage of Rent Due

The in-year rent collection achieved for end of Q4 is 100.18%, exceeded the target of 96.5%. This has resulted in an overall reduction in rent owed to the authority. The enforcement restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic were still in place until October 2021, but despite this Officers have managed to support tenants through this difficult time whilst maximising income to the Housing Revenue Account.

Arrears as a % of Rent Debit

The current rent arrears as a % of the debit achieved for Q4 is 3.63%, exceeding the target of 4.65%. This has resulted in an overall reduction in rent arrears of £18k compared to last financial year. Whilst we have ambitions to further reduce the total amount of rent owed by tenants, whilst continuing to sustain tenancies, this has surpassed expectation for rent collection, throughout a turbulent time for tenants. Since the eviction ban was lifted in October 2021, 10 evictions have been carried out which is not a significant number compared to relative years. This demonstrates the balance of maximising income to the HRA whilst prioritising tenancy support and sustainment.

Complete Repairs Right on First Visit (Priority and Urgent)

A positive first-time fix result is a tell-tale sign of an efficient workforce, we need to operate with a skilled team to achieve this and continually update the technical skills of the workforce to ensure we maintain and improve on this measure.

- 4.4 The following summary provides a brief explanation of reasons where we are close to achieving our targets (amber rating). Particular areas to highlight are:

% of Non-Decent Homes

The majority of the doors outstanding are as a result of access issues to survey or fit the new doors. Most of these are Fire doors and so we are reluctant to remove from the work programme due to the safety implications. We will continue to attempt to gain access to these properties. 4 of the doors have now been fitted in April 2022. The breakdown of the 56 properties now failing is; 40 doors, 14 electrics, 2 roofs.

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

Average Re-Let Period – General Needs (Excluding Major Works) – (Days)

The current void turn-around time for void requiring minor works is 56.08 days against the target of 32 days. Voids have experienced increased challenges since their initial contractor went into administration in 2021, leaving significant pressure on the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO). There is a high, national demand for labour, meaning that City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) has had difficulty securing the necessary workforce to turnaround the empty properties to achieve the target of 32 days.

There has also been an increase in the number of terminations which has meant that pre-termination inspections cannot be completed on all void properties. This has resulted in more difficulty when planning required works due to no advanced information on property conditions and information not being given at this stage. Due to this it has caused tenant uncertainty on how the property is to be returned causing an increase in pre-repair works, particularly cleansing and clearance works..

There are now additional contractors in place to carry out void works and we have allocated additional staff, post recruitment, from the DLO. Subsequently, we are seeing an increase in the properties being completed and relet and are on track to bring performance more in line with target next financial year.

Average Re-Let Period – General Needs (Including Major Works) – (Days)

The current void turnaround time for all properties is 65.76 days against the target of 38 days. Properties requiring major works have seen increased difficulty with sourcing necessary materials and labour, resulting in an increase in the re-let time.

As with all re-lets, new tenants have often struggled to move due to isolation, or difficulty sourcing removals in a timely manner resulting in further delays. With the award of a new repairs contract contractor, support will be in place and with the increasing availability of materials, we are improving the void turnaround time.

During 2021-22 we re-let 453 properties that are included within this measure (General Needs / Sheltered). However, it is important to note we completed an additional 155 voids that don't get included – Homeless Licenses properties, purchase & repair, NSAP etc. This has an impact on available resources.

Although these voids don't affect the re-let time, they do still require resource/materials from the various teams in the voids process so naturally it will have played some part in the increased delays in general stock void properties.

We also had a high number of refusals on void properties during the year. Of the 453 properties let within this measure, we had 108 refusals which equates to 23.8%. When we have refusals, this causes delays in the void time as the property is ready to let but we can't re-let until an offer is accepted from a prospective tenant.

% of Complaints Replied to Within Target Time

At the time of writing this, HRS now have a specific officer in place to deal with complaints, this has helped reduce response times and complaints to be dealt with. All letter templates have been updated and the Complaints Outcome form digitised to a new 365 form which makes it quicker and easier for all Officers to respond.

Customer Services now also have their new system for reporting repairs which has helped reduce (slightly) the repairs related complaints.

However, we are still getting an unprecedented high number of complaints come into the department, most of which are repairs based and still from the knock on

effect of Covid and lockdown, not having contractors in place and complaints regarding waiting times (cyclical repairs process).

There are also a lot more complaints coming in about waiting times for responses and applications to be processed in regards to housing applications due to people being at risk of Homelessness due to the high demands on this service and the increase in overall numbers of current applications and lack of housing in the city.

% of Urgent (3 Days) Repairs Carried out Within Time Limits (HRS)

This measure is showing a steady improvement rate, during quarter four alone, we have achieved 97% which is just 0.5% off the overall target. If we continue along this trend, we should see performance being in and around the target in 2022/23. Recruiting a full complement of joiners and tweaks to the scheduling element have been contributing factors.

% of Calls Answered Within 90 Seconds

Call wait times are longer this year than the previous year, as we see the effects of lifting restrictions caused by Covid -19 and deal with the backlog that inevitably built up while we were dealing only with emergencies.

Calls for housing and homelessness have also increased as residents deal with the cost of living crisis and landlords have had the ability to evict tenants restored. At the same time, we have reduced the Customer Service team by 20% to deliver cost savings. The staffing is being reduced over time as we deliver our strategy of moving many interactions to online and self-service to bring our offer in line with customer expectations.

The new online self-service repair reporting is proving popular with customers, but it is early days in this development and the expected reduction in calls has not yet been realised. As more routine queries move to the website the calls handled by customer service staff are the more complex issues and customers who need more help.

There is currently an issue with chasing repairs. In Q4 we answered 13,934 calls from our tenants on the general Housing helpline. 8958 were classified as repair related with 3777 (42%) of these chasing appointments.

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.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance

Although there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, there are

several indicators that do affect the HRA including the amount of rent collected and repairs and improvements.

We continually monitor the financial position on the HRA and HRS, with quarterly reports to Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Executive.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

Due to the nature of this report, there are no equality, diversity and human rights impacts to be assessed however their impact will be considered as part of the service delivery at all times.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 (i) There is a risk as identified, to the maximisation of our income to the HRA from rents collected.
- 7.2 (ii) There is a risk that households are required to stay in temporary accommodation longer than we would want them to due to the slow turnover of void properties.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Members are asked to note and comment on:

- a) The current performance outcomes during the financial year 2021/22.
- b) 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? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? 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