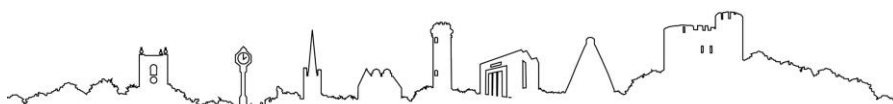


**Meeting of the Housing and Safer Communities
Select Committee**

**Monday 22nd January, 2024 at 6.00pm
In Committee Room 2, The Council House, Priory Road,
Dudley**

**Agenda - Public Session
(Meeting open to the public and press)**

1. Apologies for absence
2. To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee.
3. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct
4. [To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November, 2023 as a correct record \(Pages 5 – 25\)](#)
5. Public Forum
6. [Annual update on the Safe and Sound Partnership priorities and update on improvements to managing neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour \(Pages 26 – 42\)](#)
7. [Community Housing Services – The Neighbourhood Approach \(Pages 43 – 53\)](#)
8. [Review of Housing Finance \(Pages 54 – 67\)](#)



9. [Corporate Quarterly Performance Report – Housing and Communities Directorate – Quarter 2 \(1st July – 30th September, 2023\) \(Pages 68 – 97\)](#)
10. [Progress Tracker and Future Business \(Pages 98 – 103\)](#)
11. To consider any questions from Members to the Chair where two clear days' notice has been given to the Monitoring Officer (Council Procedure Rule 11.8).

Distribution:

Councillor A Davies (Chair)

Councillor S Bothul (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Bevan, J Cowell, T Creed, P Drake, I Kettle, K Lewis, J Martin, C Reid and M Webb

Cc: Councillor L Taylor-Childs (Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities)



Chief Executive

Dated: 12th January, 2024

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Minutes of the Housing and Safer Communities Select Committee

**Monday 20th November, 2023 at 6.00 pm
In Committee Room 2
At the Council House, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor A Davies (Chair)
Councillor S Bothul (Vice-Chair)
Councillors J Cowell, T Creed, P Drake, I Kettle, K Lewis, J Martin, C Reid,
D Stanley and M Webb

Officers:

K Jones – Director of Housing and Communities, M Lyons – Interim Lead –
Compliance and Building Safety, A Maqsood – Head of Housing Strategy
(Directorate of Housing and Communities) and K Malpass - Democratic Services
Officer (Directorate of Finance and Legal)

18. **Opening Remarks of the Chair**

In view of the recent membership changes, the Chair welcomed Councillor
C Reid to her first meeting of this Committee.

19. **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of
Councillor D Bevan.

20. **Appointment of Substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor D Stanley had been appointed as a substitute Member for Councillor D Bevan, for this meeting of the Committee only.

21. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor J Cowell declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 6 (Quarterly Housing Performance Report – Quarter 1 (1st April – 30th June, 2023)), Agenda Item No. 7 (Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Tenant Perception Survey) and Agenda Item No. 8 (Customer Engagement and Involvement) as a Council tenant.

22. **Minutes**

Councillor J Cowell referred to Minute number 14(m) – Corporate Quarterly Performance Report – Housing and Communities Directorate – Quarter 1 (1st April – 30th June, 2023), line two stating that the word Tenant be deleted to read Housing Board.

Resolved

That subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 13th September, 2023, be approved as a correct record and signed.

23. **Public Forum**

The following questions were raised by a member of the public who was unable to attend the meeting due to health issues.

- (1) In referring to the minutes of the meeting held on 13th September, 2023, which referred to the Tenant Housing Board and Dudley Housing Board, clarification was requested on what the Board was now called?
- (2) What was happening to high-rise forums? There did not appear to be a group that focused on the needs of high-rise properties.

- (3) In referring to information contained in the Quarterly Corporate Performance reports, the number of properties awaiting investment decisions had increased from 50 to 95 properties. A number of questions in relation to the matter were raised, as follows:
- (a) What was happening to those properties?
 - (b) What was required to bring the properties back into use?
 - (c) Out of the 95 properties awaiting investment decisions, what type of properties were they? The significant financial implications relating to the properties for the Local Authority was questioned as they were in high demand so why were they being held back?
 - (d) What had been spent on properties awaiting investment decisions over the last 20 years.

Resolved

That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide a written response to the member of the public.

24. **Quarterly Housing Performance Report –Quarter 1 (1st April – 30th June, 2023)**

A report of the Director of Housing and Communities was submitted on the Housing quarterly performance figures following the presentation of the Quarter 1 Corporate Quarterly Performance report submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19th October, 2023.

The Director of Housing and Communities indicated that the report provided progress against the delivery of the corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) and a service improvement plan of actions which provided Members with the opportunity to discuss performance directly relevant to the work programme of the Committee.

Dashboard summaries highlighted four corporate quarterly measures for Housing and Community Services, one highlighting “on or exceeding target” with the other three highlighting “below target”. Further information was included in the appendix to the report submitted to the meeting.

In terms of PI 1191 – Average re-let time for standard re-let, it was reported that the average re-let times for standard voids had decreased from 60.23 days in Quarter 4 2022/2023, to 49.26 days in Quarter 1 2023/2024, compared to 61.7 days for the same period last year. The positive progress had been driven by an ongoing review of the end-to-end void process, however, there had been a slight impact on void turnaround times as a result of the ongoing stock condition survey. Properties that appeared empty, but still had a legal tenancy agreement in place, required a mutual agreement or Court order to end an agreement and figures for this type of property had not been included in the void figures.

In terms of PI 1899 – Rent loss, the KPI was linked to PI 1191 above in that the quicker void properties were brought back into use, the lower the rent loss associated with the void. The cumulative rent loss in Quarter 1 2023/24 was 2.28% which equated to £338k, of which £311,555 was attributable to routine voids. The reduction of average re-let times had a positive impact on void loss which had been evidenced by the reduction of rent loss attributed to routine voids from 70% to 65%. The remaining rent loss of £247,043 in Quarter 1 2023/24 was made up of £119,219.62 due to improvement programmes in sheltered stock or decanting people to facilitate them, £19,243.43 attributed to properties used for decanting or held for future decant, and £108,580.04 attributed to ninety-five properties awaiting an investment decision. A report would be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting outlining recommendations on the disposal of homes currently held pending an investment decision.

In referring to PI 2027 – Satisfaction on how anti-social behaviour complaints were handled, it was reported that whilst figures had increased through 2022/23, satisfaction with anti-social behaviour (ASB) complaint handling had decreased in Quarter 1 2023/24. The target of 70% had been set as a stretched target and was almost 10% higher than the benchmarking median of 60.7%. When compared to the benchmarking median, the Quarter 1 2023/24 performance was only marginally lower at 59.8%, however, the Quarter 1 2023/24 performance was lower than throughout 2022/23 which was an area of concern and required further consideration.

Following the review of the ASB service in 2022/23, initial issues relating to staffing levels and processes within the service had been addressed leading to improvement in customer satisfaction. However, following reduced staff resources due to successful promotion and development opportunities and sickness absence, the service had again been impacted negatively on customer satisfaction. A full review of staffing, systems and processes was now being undertaken and would lead to improvements being observed moving forward. Progress on improving service delivery and customer satisfaction would be included in the report on Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Services programmed for 22nd January, 2023.

Following the presentation, Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and responses were provided, where necessary, as follows:-

- (a) Councillor J Cowell expressed concern that the key performance indicators (KPIs) outlined in the report submitted referred to the Quarter 1 period, which had been provided and discussed at the meeting held on 13th September, 2023. Whilst acknowledging that the figures related to Quarter 1 from the period 1st April to 30th June, 2023, the Director of Housing and Communities indicated that performance information had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19th October, 2023 and given the number of concerns raised, it was considered that Members of the Housing and Safer Communities Select Committee be provided with a further opportunity to discuss areas that required improving. Members were advised that Quarter 2 KPIs would be submitted to the Committee on 22nd January, 2023.

- (b) In referring to PI 2027 – satisfaction – the way anti-social behaviour complaints were handled, Councillor J Cowell indicated, that whilst acknowledging the rationale of transferring the lower-level anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases to the Housing Team, concern was expressed at the historic high levels of staff turnover within the service, which could negatively impact the potential for improvement. In responding, the Director of Housing and Communities explained the logic relating to the restructure and being more proactive in effectively dealing with low-level ASB and neighbour nuisance issues. Members were advised that following the recent restructure of the Directorate of Housing and Communities, a number of staff within the Anti-Social Behaviour Service had successfully obtained a position within the Housing Management Team which provided a range of expertise and knowledge into front line Housing Services. In responding to a question raised by Councillor J Cowell in relation to concerns regarding the changes taking place within the Directorate of Housing and Communities and the likelihood of impacts on tenants, the Director of Housing and Communities indicated that the Housing Management Team was fully resourced and staffed, however, the Service would be monitored frequently to maximise improvement opportunities.
- (c) In responding to a question from Councillor I Kettle, the Director of Housing and Communities indicated that whilst the service had not encountered any staffing issues, the challenges relating to recruitment was acknowledged. It was noted that specific skills and expertise were essential in certain roles within the Local Authority to ensure services were delivered in line with customer expectations. Significant competition within the employment market was acknowledged, particularly as officers' salaries within the Authority were lower in comparison to neighbouring Local Authorities and private sector organisations.
- (d) Councillor D Stanley complimented the Director of Housing and Communities on the successful recruitment of a specific officer within the Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
- (e) Councillor C Reid referred to the high level of ASB in Wolverhampton Street and surrounding areas and queried the level of responsibility of Housing Officers and at what stage Police involvement was requested.

The Director of Housing and Communities explained the various stages of ASB referrals from Housing Officers dealing with low-level ASB, to cases being transferred to the Police and Court system. Reference was made to the role of Housing Officers which required them to be visible and recognisable to tenants, placing them in an ideal position to deal with low-Level ASB cases more effectively and in a timely manner. Cases that were considered more complex or continued to escalate were referred to the ASB Specialist Team for appropriate negotiation, mediation or legal action, which may involve collaborative working with the Police should matters escalate outside the responsibility of the Local Authority. Complex ASB cases were referred to the Court for appropriate legal action as a last option in cases where the Local Authority and Police had exhausted all options available to them, however, extensive evidence was required prior to the Court system being involved.

- (f) In responding to a question from Councillor C Reid, the Director of Housing and Communities indicated that Members and tenants would not need to contact the ASB Specialist Team directly. Housing Officers would be required to deal with any reported incidents in the first instance and refer to the ASB Specialist Team should the matter continue to escalate. Should Members or tenants be dissatisfied in the way Housing Officers were dealing with a case, complaints should be made to the appropriate Housing Team Manager to review the incident and consider whether more specialist intervention was required.
- (g) Councillor D Stanley and Councillor C Reid expressed their disappointment at the void turnaround times given the number of people waiting for properties in the Borough. It was queried whether there was scope to speed up the re-letting process to enable properties to be made available in a more appropriate timeframe, given the significantly lower void turnaround times in the private section. Concern was raised in relation to void properties that remained empty due to the asset being used as storage, and it was considered that it would benefit the Local Authority financially should consideration be given to using storage organisations rather than losing rent on a property.

Whilst it was reported that void turnaround times varied depending on property type, the Director of Housing and Communities acknowledged that significant improvement was required in that specific area. A more collaborative approach was required with all services involved in the void process to reduce delays. Members were advised that whilst a property may appear empty, in some cases, a legal tenancy agreement was still in place which must be ended by mutual agreement or through the Court process before it could be turned around and relet. Whilst more work was required to reduce void turnaround times, progress had been observed compared to the same period last year due to the ongoing review of the end-to-end point void process. It was considered that targets had not been reached during Quarter 1 due to the significant work being undertaken around the stock condition survey (SCS) for all assets in the Borough.

- (h) In responding to questions raised by Councillor A Davies in relation to next steps following the completion of the SCS, the Director of Housing and Communities indicated that the current KPI targets for the average re-let times had been agreed in February 2022. Targets for 2024/25 would be considered in the near future with the aim to reducing targets further. Whilst it was anticipated that further progress would be observed moving forward, it was acknowledged that this would take some time but the service was confident that the improvements identified would rectify historic issues. The Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety reported that whilst there had initially been delays delivering the required improvements due to the work around the SCS, it was envisaged that following surveys being carried out on all Council assets, it would provide important data on properties in relation to condition and planned maintenance/repair work when a property became vacant moving forward.

The Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety reported that every void was being considered in a strategic manner and addressing the long-term viability of properties as assets became vacant. A more robust approach had been developed which had identified a significant number of void properties that required considerable investment and were beyond economic repair. Housing standards required improvement and assets identified as not being suitable for customers were disposed of, however, in order to maintain stock levels, the income generated from the sale of void properties would allow properties to be purchased from the open market which were readily adapted to aid the additional needs of some of the Council's customers.

- (i) Councillor D Stanley queried the reasons why properties were being allowed to go into disrepair and requiring significant investment to bring them back into use. It was considered that home checks should be carried out frequently to identify any maintenance/repair work in homes which should be carried out immediately to ensure the quality of the property remained satisfactory.

The Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety indicated that properties identified for disposal would be replaced by better quality accommodation. Intelligence had highlighted that some customers securing a tenancy with the Local Authority were short-term due to the condition of the property. The lack of historical investment in properties could be attributed to customers refusing access to properties to carry out assessments and required maintenance/repair work over a significant period of time. It was reported that historically, access, maintenance and repair work refusals had been accepted, however, the Local Authority had now adopted a no refusals policy to ensure the Council's assets were appropriately maintained moving forward.

- (j) Councillor J Martin queried whether there were any alternative market solutions to improve the service around void properties rather than disposal.

The Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety indicated that alternative market solutions available to the Council which would allow assets to be retained by the Local Authority were currently being investigated. There were a number of models available such as ownership models, models where the Local Authority worked collaboratively with an outside private organisation but ultimately the housing stock would be retained within the Councils housing portfolio or sold to the open market, however the sale of housing assets to the open market was not an option the Local Authority would like to consider. The preferred option would be to work collaboratively with a private sector housing provider who would manage some of Dudley's housing stock. A number of options were available and were currently being explored and a report on available options on how to manage housing stock more effectively and any financial impact would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

- (k) Councillor J Cowell expressed concern that the models being explored would result in increased rent for Council house tenants, which was considered unacceptable as council housing was considered a "last resort" accommodation, when customers were unable to afford private sector housing. The Director of Housing and Communities acknowledged the concern raised, however, indicated that they were committed to protecting Council tenants, keeping rent low and affordable whilst providing opportunities to meet customer housing needs and aspirations.
- (l) Councillor D Stanley referred to the potential challenges relating to the budget ringfenced for Housing in the event of increased interest rates due to the significant debt charge associated with the Council's housing stock.

Resolved

That the Quarter 1 Quarterly Housing Performance report covering the period 1st April to 30th June, 2023, and the comments made by Members, be noted.

25. **Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Tenant Perception Survey**

A report of the Director of Housing and Communities was submitted to provide an overview on the introduction and implementation of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), examining specifically the Baseline Tenant Perception Survey 2023 element of the research, which was attached as an appendix to the report submitted to the meeting.

The Director of Housing and Communities and Head of Housing Strategy referred to the requirements of the social housing landlords in England in providing good quality homes and services for tenants. TSM's had been developed to:-

- Make landlords' performance more visible to tenants;
- Help tenants hold landlords to account; and
- Point the Regulator to landlords that might need to improve services.

Following a consultation exercise during 2022, it had been agreed that there would be twenty-two TSM's, covering five themes namely, keeping properties in good repair, maintaining building safety, respect and helpful engagement, effective handling of complaints and responsible neighbourhood management. Ten TSM's would be measured by landlords directly and twelve would be measured by landlords through carrying out tenant perception surveys. TSM's were outlined in the report submitted to the meeting. The Regulator had provided clear guidance on how perception surveys should be undertaken and published comprehensive technical documents to ensure a consistent approach was taken by social landlords.

Social landlords would be required to record measures during 2023/24 and submit a report to the Regulator at the end of the financial year where performance would be benchmarked and published to enable tenants to view how all landlords were performing.

The Local Authority commissioned Acuity Research and Practice (Acuity) to carry out a procurement exercise on baseline and actual Tenant Perception Surveys. The baseline results would be included in Quarter 2 2023/24 with the actual results being included in Quarter 4 2023/24. The Baseline Perception Survey was conducted through telephone contact between 3rd July and 12th August, 2023, which had proven to be a more popular method with tenants. An analysis of the Baseline Tenant Perception Survey was included in the report submitted to the meeting with the full report being attached at Appendix 1.

The Baseline Tenant Perception Survey provided a valuable starting point for understanding tenants and key areas of improvements for Housing and related services.

Following the presentation, Members had the opportunity to ask questions and, make comments and responses were provided, where necessary, as follows:-

- (a) In referring to the complaints procedure, Councillor J Cowell expressed concern at the lack of engagement officers had with complainants. It was considered that complaints would be addressed more effectively with improved communication techniques. In responding, the Head of Housing Strategy acknowledged the concern raised and indicated that improved strategies were an essential requirement to ensure that the service was delivered effectively. Historically, complaints had been dealt with in line with Council policies and procedures, however, a more modernised approach was required, which had been identified following the recent Tenant Perception Survey which had been carried out. It was acknowledged that the working relationship between the Local Authority and the Housing Ombudsman had improved significantly which had created learning opportunities which had been adopted to improve efficiencies. A Learning Group had been established to consider complaints received during a period of time to ascertain any underlying themes that may not have been identified by dealing with individual complaints.
- (b) Councillor J Cowell expressed concern around the proposal to introduce a service charge for the maintenance of communal areas. Reference was made at the lack of communal maintenance in various locations of the Borough and indicated that should charges be introduced, it was essential that the service was being provided.

The Director of Housing and Communities acknowledged that some tenants had raised concerns relating to the condition of communal areas. It was reported that housing providers were legally able to apply a service charge to homes with shared facilities or open areas that required maintenance that contributed to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Proposals had been approved as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process and would be revisited with a view to introducing a nominal service charge from 2023/24. Further consideration was required to ensure that the scheme adopted was fair moving forward, which would provide tenants with the opportunity to hold the Council to account should services not be delivered effectively. More work was required to ensure that the right level of service was delivered with improved opportunities for tenants to engage with the Council and provide feedback. Members were assured that should service charges be introduced moving forward, services would be delivered across all housing with communal areas.

- (c) Councillor J Cowell referred to the additional areas of concern raised by customers, outlined on pages 59 and 60 of the Appendix submitted. The level of concerns raised were troubling and improved strategies were required to enhance service delivery and improve customer perception.
- (d) Councillor D Stanley referred to the level of performance carried out by contractors and indicated that it was essential to review all service contractors to ensure that the level of service was being delivered consistently across the Borough. Frequent concerns had been raised by constituents regarding the process for utility repairs/maintenance and appropriate annual service requirements of facilities, which had left vulnerable people without heating and hot water, which was considered unacceptable. In responding, the Director of Housing and Communities reported that a review was currently being undertaken of all external contractors with a view to adopting a new contract management arrangement to improve the level of service offered and provide tenants the opportunity to engage more effectively with contractors.

The Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety acknowledged that underperformance of some external and internal contractors was a concern and various improvement techniques had been adopted to address the ongoing issues. Whilst it was acknowledged that performance improvements had been observed with the Council's heating contractor, further improvements were necessary, particularly moving towards the winter period, however, assurances had been provided that additional resources had been secured to ensure that there was adequate staff to cover the increased demand expected for the service. Incidents of poor performance from contractors had not been referred to Senior Officers and Members were encouraged to contact the Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety to provide further information of incidents for investigation and appropriate action.

- (e) In responding to a question from Councillor C Reid, the Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety acknowledged the concerns in relation to the service provided within the remit of Green Care and confirmed that the services provided were from Council resources. Discussions were ongoing with Green Care colleagues to review service requirements and identify improved strategies to ensure a more consistent service was provided.

Councillor D Stanley referred to the historic arrangements of the Green Care Service when the Borough was divided into five townships, however, problems occurred when the areas reduced to three townships creating additional pressure on officers to manage a larger area of the Borough. There was a proposal to increase the townships back to five which would significantly improve the service moving forward. Members were reminded that a number of employees covering some of the Green Care Services were employed on a casual basis, as and when the service was required.

- (f) Councillor T Creed referred to the current arrangement the Council had with specific suppliers to provide materials to carry out replacement, repair and maintenance work in properties. Concern was raised at the lack of suppliers that officers could approach to restock materials in vehicles, which had caused delays to programmed work. It was considered that should more local suppliers be offered contracts to supply materials for the Council, it would significantly improve efficiency. The Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety indicated that a review was being undertaken in relation to housing maintenance to identify improvements and efficiencies with a view to assessing and agreeing a more attractive cost arrangement. The requirement to use central stores provided the ability to retain appropriate material on vehicles, control the cost of materials, guarantee that materials were available when required and to prevent potential fraud.
- (g) Councillors T Creed and P Drake referred to the lack of communication between officers and Councillors as it was noted that it was difficult to contact appropriate officers, particularly during periods of staff leave and sickness. Frequent complaints were also received from members of the public unable to contact Housing Officers. A number of queries were raised in relation to the level of staff employed across the service and whether employment bases were local, as well as concern in relation to officer response times to Councillors.

The Director of Housing and Communities referred to the presentation provided to Members at a previous meeting of the Committee on key priorities of the Neighbourhood Model that had been developed to reconnect and engage with tenants more effectively. Members' concerns were acknowledged in relation to the lack of communication and assurances were provided that all Housing Officers would predominantly be visible in communities and understanding tenants' concerns and delivering the service expected by customers with a view to reducing Councillor enquiries, complaints and improve satisfaction. The Service would continuously review the Neighbourhood Model to ensure that key aspirations were delivered in line with customer expectations and any feedback from Members would be welcomed.

Posters detailing photographs and central contact numbers of Housing Officers covering each area of the Borough were available online and copies would be re-circulated to Members of the Committee.

In responding to a question from Councillor C Reid, the Director of Housing and Communities indicated that a number of fixed Community Hubs would be provided in the imminent future and located in various areas of the Borough, including a hub in Halesowen and one in Chapel Street, Brierley Hill, where tenants would be able to attend and raise issues with Housing Officers. Whilst it was accepted that Community Hubs could not be provided in all areas of the Borough, in communities where tenants were unable to attend any of the fixed Community Hubs, it was intended that surgeries would be held in public buildings at various locations within the Borough, including the Dudley Council Plus building for Central Dudley tenants and possibly using the main office of the Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA). Members were advised that previously, residents had to attend the Council officers located at the Harbour Building in Brierley Hill, so offering Community Hubs within the Borough was considered progress. Frequent monitoring of the Community Hubs would be taking place to ascertain usage and consideration of changing locations should it be necessary.

Whilst it was acknowledged that opening times of Council buildings varied and providing resources to staff a building for the duration it was open was considered an inefficient use of resources. It was envisaged that drop-in surgeries be arranged initially at certain times of the day on numerous days with frequent reviews taking place to identify whether improvements were required.

- (h) In responding to a question from Councillor T Creed, the Director of Housing and Communities referred to the refreshed responsibilities of Housing Officers. Officers were required to communicate with Councillors and the community more frequently and deal with the day-to-day issues rather than working from a static location. Regular monitoring of work-related messages would be carried out with officers responding when they became available, and any concerns should be raised with Team Managers in the first instance for appropriate investigation and action.

- (i) In responding to a question from Councillor A Davies, the Director of Housing and Communities confirmed that on average Housing Officers were responsible for approximately 600 properties.
- (j) Councillor I Kettle queried the number of respondents to the Tenant Perception Survey. It was reported that 1001 customers had responded, however, on page 61 of the Appendix submitted, the number reduced to 12 respondents. In responding, the Head of Housing Strategy confirmed that the survey had been circulated randomly to a number of customers across the Borough. It was confirmed that the survey captured different elements of housing groups and whilst it was confirmed that 1001 responses had been received, only twelve customers in the category of housing for older people had provided feedback.
- (k) Councillor J Cowell queried when letterheads, e-mail signatures and other documentation would be altered as it was still recording the Harbour Building as the base location of the Housing Services and was causing confusion to customers. In acknowledging the comment made, the Director of Housing and Communities indicated that the PIMMS system was currently in the process of being updated by Human Resources (HR), however, due to resource issues in (HR) and the significant number of employees within the Directorate of Housing and Communities, the process had been delayed.

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the report submitted to the meeting and comments made by Members, be noted.
- (2) That “Know Your Community Housing Officer” posters for each of the six areas of the Borough be re-circulated to Members of the Committee.

26. **Customer Engagement and Involvement**

A report of the Director Housing and Communities was submitted on an update on the Council’s approach to customer engagement and involvement, outlining progress to date, to provide Members with the opportunity to ensure that plans were robust, met customer needs and supported the delivery of high quality, value for money services.

In presenting the report, The Director of Housing and Communities indicated that in November, 2020, the UK Government published “The Charter for Social Housing Residents: social housing white paper”. The White Paper outlined new regulatory arrangements for social landlords, including local authorities. The Regulator of Social Housing (RoSH) would be responsible for a more proactive consumer regulatory regime that would strengthen the formal standards against which the Council was regulated. The requirements and commitments of the Charter that the Council would be judged on were outlined in the report submitted to the meeting. The Council would be implementing appropriate services and standards and performance measures in order to deliver the key commitments within the Charter.

A review of the Customer Involvement and Engagement Strategy was currently being carried out with the revised strategy being co-produced with key customers, partners and Members. The strategy would provide a robust framework for listening and responding to feedback from customers to continuously improve customer experience and satisfaction. All existing customer involvement groups were being reviewed to identify what services were already in place and any potential gaps with refreshed Terms of Reference being drafted for consultation. Proposals were being developed to establish an overarching Customer Involvement Board to oversee the delivery of the revised Strategy, to lead on the publication of the Customer Annual Report and to scrutinise performance against the RoSH consumer standards, TSM’s, Ombudsman Complain Handling Code and other customer related activity.

The Council had engaged TPAS, a not-for-profit organisation to undertake a Smart Review of the Council’s housing services. The process included a review of key documents and processes, together with listening to feedback from staff and tenants to capture and understand experience of resident engagement. Actions arising out of the review would be incorporated in the new Customer Engagement and Involvement Strategy.

Information on key customer communication strategies and events were outlined in the report submitted at the meeting.

Following the presentation, Members had the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and responses were provided, where necessary, as follows:-

- (a) In responding to a question from Councillor J Cowell in relation to the level of engagement with both tenants and residents, the Director of Housing and Communities indicated that there was a requirement to engage with both housing groups to ensure that the key obligations of the Customer Engagement and Involvement Strategy were met. It was noted that excluding customers would disadvantage the desired outcome of the Strategy and create obstacles when tackling issues that affect the whole community effectively.
- (b) Councillor J Cowell queried other than DFTRA and the Housing Group, what other involvement groups had been reviewed. Reference was made to the TPAS Smart Review of housing services, and it was queried whether individual Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) or the wider housing organisations had been approached. It was considered that communicating with tenants would provide a better understand of the housing issues within the Borough.

The Director of Housing and Communities confirmed that all groups currently working with the Council were being reviewed, including the constitution of the Housing Board and the service level agreement (SLA) with DFTRA. It was acknowledged that it was an essential part of the Strategy to engage with customers to identify any gaps within the service that needed to be addressed moving forward to improve the services provided. Whilst TPAS had approached DFTRA as the representative body of TRAs, the focus was to encourage all customers to get involved and not just specific groups, to provide the service with a more community view.

- (c) Councillor J Cowell referred to the Safety Matters Event where approximately twelve customers attended. It was considered that around 50% of attendees were residents, and the themed workshops that focussed on communal areas, did not affect that group of people.
- (d) Councillor A Davies emphasised the importance of involving residents in issues affecting the Borough. He referred to cases where issues had arisen where private landlords had been approached and keen to rectify problems identified, however, a resident had resisted the need to pursue required resolutions. It was essential that the Council fulfilled its obligations and improve customer perception.

Resolved

- (1) That the aspirations and commitments of the Housing White Paper and its impact upon the Council, be noted.
 - (2) That the activity in progress to review and refresh the Council's approach to engaging with tenants to improve customer experience and facilitate consumer regulation, be noted.
-

27. Progress Tracker and Future Business

In providing an update on the Action Tracker, the Chair indicated that all outstanding responses had now been actioned. He expressed his appreciation to all officers for the work carried out, however requested that responses were circulated promptly.

In responding to a question from Councillor J Cowell, it was agreed that responses provided to Members of the public be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

Councillor J Cowell raised concern in relation to the number of gas service appointments being cancelled at the last minute. It was an ongoing issue that needed to be addressed moving forward. In responding, the Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety indicated that tenant concerns had not been raised with appropriate officers. Intelligence received had been in relation to the lack of customer engagement with the contractor to arrange appointments. The Council adopted a sixty-five day access process prior to the expiration of gas certificates. Members were advised that the service had a robust approach to annual gas safety checks and numerous engagement methods were carried out towards the expiry of a certificate. The difficulty was the wide appointment banding times provided to customers and whilst consideration had been provided to reducing appointment banding times, it was not considered appropriate. Whilst it was acknowledged that improved communication between tenant and contractor was essential, the Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Services urged Members to contact him directly with any concerns raised by tenants for investigation and appropriate action.

Councillor C Reid referred to a personal issue within her ward regarding an infestation of bedbugs affecting a low-rise block of flats and whilst it was not considered an issue for the Council, one resident had a leak in his bedroom, however, the contractor had refused to access the property because of the infestation. The Director of Housing and Communities requested that further information be supplied, and appropriate action would be taken.

In referring to minute no 15(2), Councillor D Stanley indicated that it was not his responsibility to contact officers to provide further information, however, indicated that whilst personal contact details would not be provided due to data protection and the individual being a vulnerable person, the e-mail received regarding the matter would be submitted to the Interim Lead for Compliance and Building Safety for appropriate action.

Resolved

- (1) That the information contained in the Action Tracker and Future Business for the Committee, be noted.
- (2) That responses provided to Members of the public be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

27. **Questions Under Council Procedure Rule 11.8**

There were no questions to the Chair pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 11.8.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm

CHAIR

Meeting of the Housing and Safer Communities Select Committee – 22nd January 2024

Report of the Director of Housing and Communities

Annual update on the Safe and Sound Partnership priorities and update on improvements to managing neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Safe and Sound (Dudley’s Community Safety Partnership) and an update on the ongoing work to improve the management of neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the content of the report is noted.

Background

3. Safe and Sound is Dudley’s Community Safety Partnership, as required in statute by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, its subsequent amendments and other relevant legislation.
4. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Section 17 (amended June 2010) states that “without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour, reduce re-offending, prevent behaviour adversely affecting the environment, and prevent the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area.”

5. The Responsible Authorities are: -
 - Dudley MBC
 - West Midlands Police
 - West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service
 - National Probation Service
 - Integrated Care Board
6. There is a duty to cooperate with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Responsible Authorities also have a statutory duty to ensure that key agencies come together to work in partnership in a Community Safety Partnership.
7. The Community Safety Partnership's statutory requirements include: -
 - to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour
 - produce an annual strategic assessment
 - reduce re-offending
 - prevent behaviour adversely affecting the environment
 - prevent the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and other substances in its area
 - take responsibility for the domestic homicide review process
 - Hold at least one public meeting per year so that members of the public can meet senior decision makers

Local Governance

8. The work of the Dudley Community Safety Partnership is directed by the Safe and Sound Strategic Board. The Board is co-chaired by Chief Superintendent Anthony Tagg and by Hayley Rowley, Dudley MBC Head of Safer Communities.

The Board also acts as Dudley's Local Police and Crime Board.
9. The Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Services are members of the Community Safety Partnership Board together with representatives from the Responsible Authorities and Community, Voluntary and Faith Sectors.
10. The work of Safe and Sound is carried out by a number of sub-groups that relate to the Board's priorities, as set out in sections 13 and 14 below. See structure chart in appendix 1.

Safe and Sound – Priorities

Priorities are identified through Dudley Borough's Strategic Assessment, and through engagement with our communities through 'Dudley: Have Your Say' an annual public meeting, survey and through online consultation.

Dudley Have Your Say told us as follows:

Responses to the 2022/2023 survey showed that residents consider anti-social behaviour, house burglaries and dangerous driving to be the main concerns of our communities across the borough.

Within the anti-social behaviour category, litter, criminal damage/ graffiti, and young people 'hanging around' were identified as the main concerns.

The 2023 / 2024 survey is available online for completion by those that live and work within the borough, or in hard copy format on request. Views collected from the survey will again feed into the partnership response to the priorities and the annual strategic assessment.

The 2023 / 2024 public meeting will be taking place on March 19th at Stourbridge Town Hall. Further details can be found at: <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/have-your-say>

11. Views obtained from last year's survey have informed this year's strategic priorities, including influencing the development of the newly formed Road Safety Group, improved joined up working across council directorates such as Street Care and Environmental Health.

Using the data we gather, and the views of our communities, the current Safe and Sound priorities are:

- Tackling neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Domestic abuse and violence against women and girls: safeguarding victims and tackling perpetrators
- Reducing re-offending and tackling the causes of crime
- Reducing violence and exploitation: safeguarding those at risk of violence and exploitation
- Tackling hate crime, community tensions and extremism
- Contributing to the wellbeing & inequalities strategy
- Improving the trust and confidence of all of the communities of Dudley

Safe and Sound Strategic Board

12. The work of the board is delivered through its subgroups. The Safe & Sound board hold its subgroups to account for their contributions to its aims and purpose and for their performance.

The responsible sub-groups are:

- Dudley domestic abuse local partnership board (and its Subgroups which include the MARAC Governance Group (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference for High risk victims of DA), Domestic Homicide Governance

Group and the Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Forum);

- Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategic Group
- Violence Prevention Group
- Dudley Combatting Drug and Alcohol Misuse Partnership
- Modern Slavery Strategic Group
- Rogue Landlord Operational Group
- CONTEST Board – currently being developed
- Prevent Delivery Group
- Protect Delivery Group – currently being developed
- Channel Panel
- Community Cohesion / Tension Monitoring Group (including Hate Crime)
- Road Safety Group – newly developed
- Safer Places
- Youth Justice Services (YJS) Management Board

13. Each Sub-group lead provides a written quarterly update on activity and progress to the Safe & Sound Board and will attend the quarterly Board meeting. The Safe & Sound Board report as necessary on those activities that impact upon the Dudley Borough Vision's aspirations.

Online Harms, Reducing Re-offending and Serious Organised Crime remain priorities that run as a 'golden thread' across all groups within the CSP.

14. Work will take place in advance of the new year, 2024 / 2025, to revise the current reporting requirements to ensure that each subgroup has a framework in place to ensure that performance is measured and that outcomes and the direct impact of the groups can be evidenced.

Regional Links

15. There are formal links to work that takes place at a regional level, for example with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and the four "Exploitation Boards" that sit within this structure (Domestic Abuse, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Sexual Assault and Abuse, and Exploitation and Missing), in addition to the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, the West Midlands Wide CSP, and the Regional Reducing Reoffending Delivery Group.

Crime data overview

16. At the time of writing data, West Midlands Police Data was available for the Quarter 2 period of 2023 / 2024:

The most recent iQuanta data (October 2023) shows that Dudley remains the safest Community Safety Partnership within the West Midlands Police Force area with the lowest crime rate per 1000 population (1.567).

Total recorded crime during Q2 this year, compared to last year, saw a decrease of 898 (11.8%). Dudley accounted for 8.0% of the total recorded crime within West Midlands Police during Q2, with violence against the person being the main offence, accounting for 42.2% of the total recorded crime in the borough.

Sub-group Progress and Highlights over the last 12 months

17. Dudley Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DDALPB)

The Dudley Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board is a statutory board in its own right. Its purpose is to ensure oversight of the duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

The DDALPB has overseen a refreshed Domestic Abuse needs assessment and subsequent refresh of the Domestic Abuse Strategy. This new strategy will inform the action plan for the group and the work of partners over the next 2 years.

Included in the groups action plan are actions from Domestic Homicide reviews, to ensure that practice improves / changes as a result of these reviews.

The group has oversight of the Domestic Abuse New Burdens fund, arising from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the work commissioned as a result of the needs assessment, for example, support in safe accommodation and a comprehensive training offer across sectors.

Reports are received from service providers on a quarterly basis to ensure that appropriate services are being delivered to our residents and that any new and emerging trends/issues/challenges are identified and acted upon if required.

Regional MARAC Coordination continues with updates being received as a standing agenda item at meetings. A separate MARAC governance group has been convened under the DDALPB to ensure oversight whilst the MARAC process is reviewed and updated regionally.

Due to the increase in Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), a DHR Governance Group has been convened which will not only form the core panel for any new DHRs but also have oversight of all DHR action plans. The group will work to monitor and identify themes arising across DHRs.

The DA Service directory of services has been updated and uploaded onto the safe and sound website <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/domesticabuse>

Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategic Group

The VAWG strategic group links with the DDALPB and acts as a forum to share data and intelligence on sexual assault and abuse, stalking, forced marriage and honour based abuse, agreeing any appropriate actions as necessary. This is intended to avoid such matters being lost within the wider partnership arrangements.

The groups action plan includes work around creating a positive culture within and across our organisations, Safer Spaces (Night Time Economy, Generic safety across the borough – safer spaces 24 hours a day, online) and Early Intervention / preventing offending and reducing reoffending/ targeting perpetrators. It links into the VAWG action plan.

A sexual assault and abuse service directory is in the process of being updated.

Violence Prevention Group

This group has been progressing work in relation to the Serious Violence Duty.

To that end it has undertaken of a serious violence needs assessment, which will be published, as per the Statutory requirement, by 31st January 2024.

A strategy based on this needs assessment has also been developed and a plan to progress this strategy will follow.

Mapping of services has also taken place and can be found at <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/violence-prevention>

Dudley Combatting Drug and Alcohol Misuse Partnership (CDAP)

Dudley CDAP's work aims to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of some of the more vulnerable residents in Dudley. Helping to build resilience within individuals and communities to aid recovery after the misuse of substances. It also aims to understand and reduce the impact of substance misuse on the community.

The Substance Misuse Alliance and the Dudley Combating Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (Dudley CDAP) have merged.

The adult integrated substance misuse service and Dudley Integrated Health and Care have been working together to improve access to healthcare services for people using substances. The service has been able to make referrals to GP Integrated Care Team (ICT) meetings since Sep 2022 and have reported that this has been very valuable.

During June-August there was a surge in nitazene adulterated heroin overdose deaths in the West Midlands. There was a very quick response from within DMBC teams and from local providers who put in place action plans, including additional naloxone supplies being purchased and provided to service users, and training for frontline staff.

Work is taking place to amend Dudley's Fentanyl action plan and reinvigorate our Local Drug Information System (including a system for different levels of alerts) and Drug Death Review Panel.

Adult in treatment numbers currently lower than expected; however, an action plan is in place to address this.

Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Strategic Group

This is a newly formed group which has met once.

Work has begun to establish the respective starting points of our individual services, identifying the data that we each hold and our current response, including any challenges and barriers faced.

The work of this group will link with the Safeguarding People Partnership exploitation subgroups and the regional Modern Slavery Board.

Rogue Landlord Operational Group

The role of the group is to provide a multi agency approach for tackling rogue landlords.

A landlord may be regarded as rogue where “a landlord knowingly flouts their obligations by renting out unsafe and substandard accommodation to tenants, many of whom may be vulnerable.” They may also condone the immoral or illegal behaviour of their tenants through acts or omissions.

The group works together to highlight cases and to ensure a lead partner is identified to support the completion of any actions associated with each case, ensuring the right agency, with the appropriate powers, achieves the required outcome.

The Group now works to a RAG rating for Rogue Landlords, this supports the focus and the attention of the Group to assign and complete work in an effective manner.

Below is an overview of the differing bands:

Rating	Conditions for rating
Emergency case meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate risk to health & safety • Urgent multi-agency action required • Involving large numbers of people • High profile • Requested by a member of the group
Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property is in a condition that may harm the occupants • Protecting vulnerable or hard-to-reach tenants or occupants, including safeguarding concerns & referrals, harassment of occupants, subjected to modern slavery and exploitation • A fire or fire safety concerns • Illegal / retaliatory evictions • Anti-social behaviour by the landlord or occupants • Part of a Police operation or use of property for serious criminal activities • Repeat offenders or multiple cases by a specific landlord – including previous offences / enforcement action, several complaints about them from tenants and neighbours, on the Government’s Rogue Landlords Database • Non-compliance with enforcement action
Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor housing conditions or maintenance • Poor management • Overcrowding • Property has pests, waste piled up outside or subjected to fly tipping • Use of property for illegal activities • Within Police impact areas of high crime or hotspots of rogue landlord activity • Planning breaches • Suspected unlicensed HMO • HMO licensing contraventions • Infringement of Building Regulations
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep on the radar / monitoring • Need a multi-agency approach to overcoming barriers to potential case resolution or benefit from shared intelligence

Prevent Delivery Group

The Board has clearly defined priorities and actions. At each meeting, we receive a Situational Assessment, so that we understand our current position, any emerging threats that may need mitigating action and review/agree our priorities.

A training needs analysis, as was highlighted by Ian Grundy (Home Office regional advisor) as ‘best practice’ has been carried out within the Partnership.

The Home Office draft Benchmarking Exercise received at the beginning of the year demonstrates the progress made by the partnership the highlights include:

- Risk assessment process – improvement
- Effective multi-agency partnership board – improvement
- Partnership delivery plan – improvement
- Prevent referral process – improvement
- Channel Panel – same (4 out of 5)
- Problem-solving process – improvement
- Training programme – improvement
- Venue hire policy – same (at the desired level)
- Community engagement – same (at the desired level)
- Communications plan – we self-assessed as requiring improvement

Channel Panel

Channel forms a key part of Prevent and was placed on a statutory footing in 2015 through the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (“CT&S Act”). The process adopts a multi-agency approach to identifying and providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, regardless of age, faith, ethnicity or background.

The CT&S Act is intended to secure effective local cooperation and delivery of Channel in all areas. In practice this means:

- local authorities will have a Channel panel in their area
- the local authority will provide the panel chair and deputy chair
- the panel will develop a support plan for individuals adopted as Channel cases
- where Channel is not appropriate, the panel will consider alternative forms of support, including health care and social care services
- the panel will ensure accurate records are kept detailing the support plan, agreed actions and decision-making, and outcomes
- all partners of a panel, as far as is appropriate and reasonably practicable, will cooperate with the police and the panel in the carrying out of their function

Section 38 of the CT&S Act places a duty to cooperate on all partners of a panel, as far as is appropriate and reasonably practicable, to assist the police and the panel in carrying out their functions under the CT&S Act.

The Dudley Channel Panel meets monthly through the year. The Chair of the Panel is the Director of Housing and Communities at DMBC, and the Deputy Chair is the Head of Safer Communities at DMBC, in line with the requirements of the CT&S Act.

Having reviewed the Annual Assurance Statement for 2022/23 in May, Panel Members identified 5 areas where a red rating was appropriate – these have all now been resolved.

Community Cohesion / Tension Monitoring Group (including Hate Crime)

We believe that aligning the community cohesion tension monitoring group with the work of hate crime will bring additional benefits to the Safe and Sound Partnership whilst simplifying our partnership structure and driving engagement within our communities to build stronger, safer resilient and diverse communities across the borough.

Dudley has an ever-increasing diverse collection of communities that may face challenges due to migration, deprivation, and intergenerational discourse that could lead to rise in hate and damage the fabric of cohesion within the borough.

Evidence often shows that communal tensions lead to hate motivated antisocial behaviour in public spaces, hate crimes against individuals, families and employers. We also know that it can lead to a further breakdown in relationships with the Council, Police etc.

The priority action for the group is the refresh of the Community Cohesion and Hate Crime Strategy, which will be driven forward taking into account the proposed refresh of the group's terms of reference. It is anticipated that a forward workplan for the group will fall out of the strategy review.

Safer Places

Safer Places is a forum for partners to discuss cases that arise from public places or other locations where there have been high demand for service from police or other partners.

Cases that are suitable for safer places are those which the referring agency find too complex or challenging to resolve within their own problem-solving capability.

The Operating Procedure for Safer Places has been revised recently in an attempt to make the forum more action driven and outcome focused. The remit for cases has been widened.

Youth Justice Services (YJS) Management Board

The Youth Justice Service Management Board is also a Statutory Board in its own right. The Priorities agreed for the YJS for 2023/24 at a strategic level are:

- Prevention and Diversion
- Serious Violence
- Inclusion
- Think Family

The work of the YJS continues to contribute to positive outcomes for children by diverting them from the formal system wherever is possible and appropriate, and by offering interventions to reduce reoffending.

One of these interventions is the Turnaround programme. This programme enables us to work with children and families before issues they may be facing becomes entrenched, by offering them support with parenting and family matters, as well as the attempts being made to engage the individual child in positive activities.

The YJS have also continued to engage in the educational landscape of Dudley, by attending schools and colleges across the borough, to educate children on areas of concern to us and our partners, such as anti-social behaviour, exploitation & knife crime.

The board ensure that feedback is obtained from pupils and professionals, with a view to using this to shape our offer going forward.

Latest data available from the Youth Justice Board notes progress against key data indicators including a significant reduction in First Time Entrants and the number of children in custody.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

18. The Community Safety Partnership has a statutory duty in respect of undertaking Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Since this duty began in April 2011, 12 notifications have been received by the partnership with 9 reaching the threshold for a review. 7 of these notifications have been received since 2020. 5 of the reviews that have proceeded have involved a suicide.

Funding for this statutory area of work is stretched.

Training

19. A range of training linked to the partnership priorities is available. Details can be found on the relevant 'helphub' topic pages: <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/help-hub>

Communications

20. The partnership share communications around our priority areas of work, including information about local services, how to access advice and regional and national campaigns throughout the year.

The communications plan includes the 'Working Together' campaign to promote the work of the partnership and provides for increased messaging at specific times of the year around certain topics (for example Hate Crime Week, Modern Slavery Day, Lighter Nights, Darker Nights, Christmas, sports tournaments, valentines day, Day of Remembrance etc).

The safe and sound website is updated as appropriate and includes specific 'help hub' pages for a range of our topics where you will find information, advice and how to report: Visit: <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/help-hub>

The Partnership Domestic Abuse, Modern Slavery and Hate Crime posters and leaflets have been translated into 6 additional languages to ensure we do all we can to reach our communities.

Funding

21. The Partnership hold the 'Community Safety Fund' received from The Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) each year.

In previous years this has been £135,000. The amount for 2024 / 2025 is yet to be confirmed.

The Community Safety Fund is used to progress work around the partnership priorities across a range of projects and quarterly returns are required by the OPCC on the use of this fund.

Projects funded in 2023 / 2024 include:

- The Sanctuary Service for those residents experiencing domestic abuse, allowing them to stay safely in their own home where appropriate.
- 'Reachable moments' in Russell's Hall Hospital - peer advisors that support young people aged 11-25 admitted to A&E due to violence, abuse or exploitation.
- Victim Support Service for residents experiencing ASB.
- Life in Lye – a community cohesion project empowering local people to be leaders of positive change.
- Dedicated CAPA support for the partnership to ensure relevant and timely communications are shared across the borough in line with the communications plan as outlined above, but also where a reactive response is required, in addition to the upkeep and development of the partnership website.

The Partnership have an allocation of £15,000 from the OPCC per year to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews. With the recent increase of reviews and the increase of the cost of DHRs (regionally the average cost per review is £9688.07) there will be a short fall in this funding in coming years.

The Domestic Abuse 'New Burdens Fund' is allocated to each Local Authority by The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, in order to support Local Authorities with their duties in respect of the Act. This fund is strictly ringfenced to provide support to those victims and their children who are residing in safe accommodation and is being used to fund specialist support in refuge, dedicated posts within the

housing directorate, a specialist children's support service and training packages.

Funding is also received via the Violence Reduction Partnership in respect of the Serious Violence Duty / Violence Prevention. In 2023 / 2024 this is £44580,79 and has been used to fund a range of projects in relation to reducing and preventing Youth Violence.

Anti-social behaviour and neighbour disputes

22. The restructure of housing services to deliver the community housing vision, as set out in the report to Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee on 21st September 2022, is now complete. During 2023/24 the ASB team moved from the Community Housing area of the Directorate and now sits within Safer Communities, a wider service area which comprises of homelessness services, traveller site and enforcement work, resettlement and inclusion, and community safety. The move aims to bring together the work across these overlapping service areas and improve relationships and information sharing with key partners.

It is hoped that by utilising the wider staff resources of this larger team and the information held within the service area it will help us to look at how we can expand the current remit of the service to deal with anti-social behaviour and nuisance in the community as well as within our homes.

This work will link in, where appropriate, with the work of the Community Safety Team in relation to Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and will be the base for the new street officer team, a team of 4 officers working across Dudley's hotspot areas to prevent, disperse and enforce against ASB.

During 2023 the anti-social behaviour team has worked to clear the backlog of cases within the service area, and to respond to feedback on the services delivered by the team. Up until September 2023 the team continued to struggle due to low staff resources caused by sickness absence and vacant posts but following recruitment the team is now starting to move on to a more stable footing.

The team have begun to develop and improve service delivery. A revised policy is in place and a new working procedure is in progress that we hope will improve service delivery.

IT has been an issue, with data quality issues identified, and so in response, procurement is underway for a new case management system.

- 23 Over the first three months of the financial year 23/24 the anti-social behaviour and community housing teams have worked together and have developed and agreed the new model for managing anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance, with community housing officers dealing with day to day issues on their estates, and the anti-social behaviour officers picking up and managing more complex/higher risk cases.
24. There are many benefits to this approach including, but not limited to:
- Community Housing Officers being able to deal more quickly with issues as they arise on their patches, using their knowledge of the area and relationships with residents to try and deal with potential issues before they escalate into something more difficult to manage.
 - Trained Anti-Social Behaviour Officers having more time and resources to case manage more complex cases, ensuring that all evidence required to pursue any legal remedies is gathered and cases are progressed in a robust and timely manner.
25. The ASB service has secured a set number of hours of advice from an external, independent ASB expert. These hours have been used to undertake independent case reviews in particularly complex cases, to provide advice and training to the team, and to advise on any changes in policy and practice which would improve or enhance service delivery and outcomes.

Training for both the ASB team and Community Housing Officers continues into the new year.

26. Case reviews (formerly known as the Community Trigger).

Significant work has been undertaken throughout 2023 to update and amend the case review process. This has led to improvements in data capture and information on our websites has been revised to reflect the new terminology of ASB Case Reviews.

We have seen a minor uplift in ASB Case Reviews this year, we believe this is because of publicity around the ASB legislation from the government and from additional publicity.

Finance

27. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, there are potential financial implications arising in respect of the short fall for funding of Domestic Homicide Reviews, as DMBC are a statutory partner in the Community safety Partnership.

Law

28. Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community Safety Partnership) must meet the requirements set out by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its subsequent amendments.

Other legislation that applies to Safe and Sound includes:

- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 (Section 9 Domestic Homicide Reviews)
- Police and Justice Act 2006
- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Risk Management

29. There are no material risks arising directly from this report. Any risks identified relating to the subject areas falling under the remit of Safe and Sound are recorded, managed and reported upon through the relevant directorate and/or partners risk register.

Equality Impact

30. There are no equality impact implications arising directly from this report. However, there are differential impacts on individuals, families, and communities in respect of issues that Safe and Sound seeks to address. This needs to be borne in mind when planning and delivering work and services.
31. Communities, including young people, have been consulted with to inform the priorities of the Safe and Sound Community Safety Partnership.
32. Work undertaken by Safe and Sound will have a positive effect on children and young people who may be affected by the issues that the Partnership seeks to address.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

33. Whilst this report does not have any immediate organisational development/HR or transformational implications, it is important to build the confidence and knowledge of the workforce in respect of a range of issues covered in this report relating to the community safety agenda.

Commercial/Procurement

34. There are no commercial or procurement implications arising directly from this report.

Environment/Climate Change

35. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Council Priorities and Projects

36. The work of the Safe and Sound Community Safety Partnership supports the following key priority areas with the Council Plan:

- Dudley the Safe and Healthy Borough - Residents live in safe communities where safeguarding of vulnerable people of all ages protects them from harm and supports the prevention of crime and exploitation.
- Dudley Borough the Destination of Choice - A place of healthy, resilient, safe communities where people have high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future.

K. Jones

Director of Housing and Communities

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Safe and Sound Structure Chart October 2023

**Safe & Sound: Dudley's Community Safety Partnership
Strategic Board**

Domestic Abuse

Violence and Harm Prevention

Modern Slavery / Exploitation

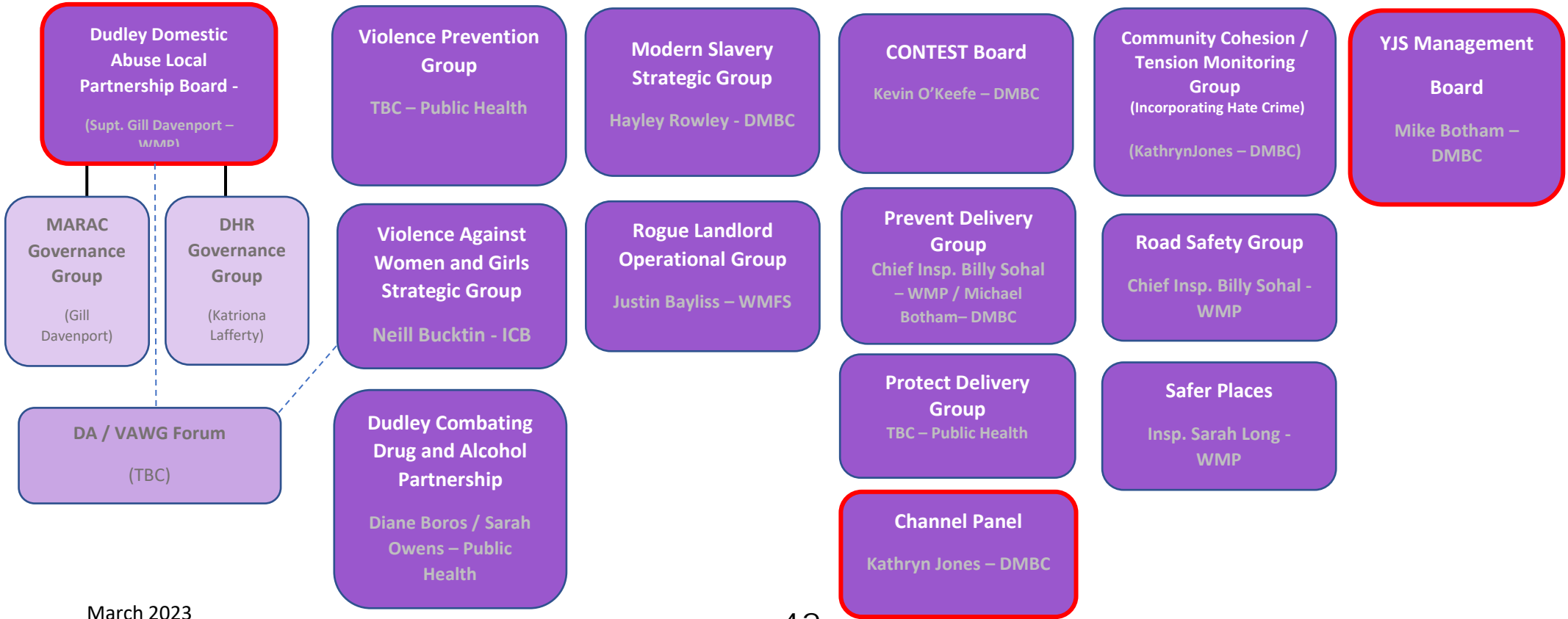
Countering Terrorism and Extremism

Anti-social Behaviour and Community Cohesion

Reducing Reoffending

The Strategic Board subgroups below fall under the above priority areas of work. These groups do not all operate completely independently of each other and there a number of links across areas of work. Where groups feed directly into each other this is denoted with connecting lines. Statutory Boards in their own right are highlighted with a red border

Online Harms, Reducing Re-offending and Serious Organised Crime remain Priorities that run as a 'golden thread' across all groups



Meeting of the Housing and Safer Communities Select Committee – 22nd January 2024

Report of the Director of Housing and Communities

Community Housing Services – the neighbourhood approach

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work that is underway to restructure and improve the tenancy and estate management services provided to Dudley MBC tenants.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the content of the report is noted.

Background

3. The Neighbourhood Model, and associated restructure of housing management services, has been implemented to improve services and ensure that our teams reconnect with customers, elected members and communities.

The principles of the model are to strengthen our approach to neighbourhood management through an increased presence, with greater visibility of Housing staff, ensuring greater local involvement of customers, Ward Members and partner organisations.

The Community Housing Team

4. The restructure of the Community Housing team has been completed, with the new structure and roles focused on delivering the neighbourhood model. The team now consists of 36 Community Housing Officers, supported by a team of 8 Community Housing Assistants. There are six Team Managers,

each with responsibility for a team of Community Housing Officers and Assistants.

Community Hubs

5. As part of our commitment to communicate better with tenants, we are opening Housing Hubs and surgeries across the borough. Our first two Housing Hubs in Halesowen and Brierley Hill are ready to receive visitors from the new year. While we work to put other hubs in place, we will be running surgeries from a variety of locations including, Dudley Council Plus, some Children's Centres and other public offices. These surgeries will be up and running in January too.
6. As well as acting as a focal point in our communities from which advice surgeries and estate walkabouts can be based, the hubs will increase opportunities for partnership working, both with other council services and with key partners. We are working closely with our police partners, who are looking to co-locate their neighbourhood team within the Halesowen hub.

The Brierley Hill Housing Hub is situated on the Chapel Street Estate and will be opening to the public from 16th January 2024. The office will be open for surgeries Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 10am and 2pm. During this time residents can attend pre-booked appointments with their Housing Officer and walk-in enquiries will also be assisted where possible.

The Halesowen Housing Hub is located on the Highfields Estate and will be open to the public from 9th January 2024. The office will be open for surgeries Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 10am and 2pm for pre-booked appointments and walk-in enquiries. There will be a number of Housing teams who co-locate at this office to ensure a joined-up approach to housing management.

We are still looking at options for a permanent Housing Hub in Stourbridge. However surgeries are taking place weekly at Stourbridge library and Baylie Court at a variety of times to meet the needs of tenants with different commitments.

Surgeries will commence at North Dudley family Centre for our tenants living in the North of the borough. Initially this will be for three hours each week but will be increased if we have sufficient demand.

For tenants who live in central Dudley, surgeries will commence from Tuesday 9th January, every Tuesday and Thursday, 10am-3pm at Dudley Council Plus.

The South Dudley Area Hub is planned to be situated at the Dudley Federation of Tenants & Residents Association (DFTRA) office and the Community Housing Team are working in partnership with DFTRA to develop the hub for weekly surgery appointments to improve our customer experience and raise levels of satisfaction. As soon as arrangements have been finalised further communications will follow to keep tenants and stakeholders informed.

Customer Experience

7. Since the Neighbourhood Model was implemented the Community Housing service has developed a different approach to improve our high rise estates by completing 4 High Rise Living events targeting 6 high rise buildings across the borough as part of our managed programme of visits to our high rise blocks.

At the High Rise Living events we have involved other service areas and key partners such as the Fire Service where appropriate. The High Rise Living Events have been successful and have helped to:

- Foster positive professional relationships amongst colleagues and strengthen cross-team working in Housing & Communities.
- Forge stronger partnerships with other council departments and promote interagency working with external partners at both strategic and operational levels.

Further events are being planned in our high rise buildings at Chapel Street, Brierley Hill and Highfields, Halesowen. Other events in high priority low rise buildings including Hill Bank will also be held in 2024.

The team have also supported the work of other service areas, including door knocking, awareness raising and advice in relation to access for compliance visits and tackling tenancy fraud.

Finance

8. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Law

9. The actions set out within this report will help ensure the Council's compliance with Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory standards and the Housing Ombudsman Code.

Risk Management

10. There are no material risks arising directly from this report.

Equality Impact

11. There are no equality impact implications arising directly from this report.
12. The Neighbourhood Model will have a positive effect on children and young people who live in the homes and communities supported by the Community Housing Team.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

13. Whilst this report does not have any immediate organisational development impact, the skills and capabilities of our workforce will be key to making this model successful. The new model will be supported by a review of current skills and capabilities and will be supported in the future by the mandatory qualifications that the Regulator of Social Housing will be bringing in for housing professionals.

Commercial/Procurement

14. There are no commercial or procurement implications arising directly from this report.

Environment/Climate Change

15. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Council Priorities and Projects

16. Developing Housing services which meet the regulatory standards and the aspirations of the Social Housing White Paper also supports the delivery of all four priorities in the Dudley Council Plan 2022 - 25:
- Dudley the borough of opportunity
 - Dudley the safe and healthy borough
 - Dudley the borough of ambition and enterprise
 - Dudley borough as the destination of choice

K. Jones

Director of Housing and Communities

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Telephone: 01384 815420
Email: kathryn.jones@dudley.gov.uk

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Know Your Community Housing Team posters

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY HOUSING TEAM BRIERLEY HILL



Your **BRIERLEY HILL** Housing Team

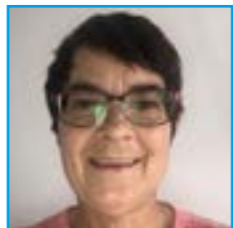


Karen Kibrya
Community Housing Team Manager

Your **Community Housing** Officers



Kerry Cash



Debbie Churchill



Louise Nation



Steve Perry



Kerri Read



Lucy Taylor

Brockmoor • Bromley • Chapel Street • Dudley Fields • Kingswinford • Pensnett • Wall Heath

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Here are some useful numbers to get in touch

BRIERLEY HILL HOUSING TEAM

• 01384 812599 • BrierleyHillHEC@dudley.gov.uk

Community Housing Team Manager

• 01384 812465

Dudley Council Plus

• 0300 555 2345

To report a repair

• 0300 555 8283

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-and-improvements>

To pay your rent

• 0300 555 7000

To discuss your rent account

• 0300 555 0010 • Incomenorth.dachs@dudley.gov.uk

To speak to the Leaseholder Team

• 01384 815096

To make an application for housing

• 01384 817760

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-options/>

To report a problem with anti-social behaviour

• 0300 555 2345

• <https://customer.dudley.gov.uk/antisocialbehaviour/begin/>

To make a complaint or compliment

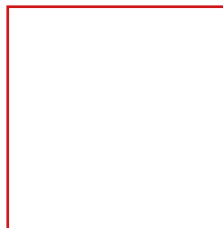
• 0300 555 2345

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/complaints/>

How to get Involved

• 01384 815168 • participation@dudley.gov.uk

KNOW YOUR **COMMUNITY HOUSING TEAM** DUDLEY CENTRAL



Your **DUDLEY CENTRAL** Housing Team



Rob Wade
Community Housing Team Manager

Your **Community Housing** Officers



Helen Bailey



Emma Fryer



Ghalam Gadair



Sharon Ghandam



Sabia Jamil



Phil Smith

Kates Hill North, • Wren's Nest • Dudley Central • Russells Hall • Woodsetton • Priority

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Here are some useful numbers to get in touch

DUDLEY CENTRAL HOUSING TEAM

• 01384 817388 • CentralDudleyHEC@dudley.gov.uk

Community Housing Team Manager

• 01384 812466

Dudley Council Plus

• 0300 555 2345

To report a repair

• 0300 555 8283

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-and-improvements>

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KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY HOUSING TEAM HALESOWEN



Your **HALESOWEN** Housing Team



Lisa Watson
Community Housing Team Manager

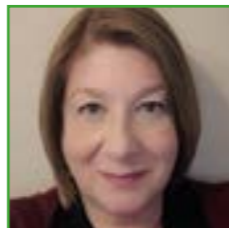
Your **Community Housing** Officers



Carl Barrett



Leanne Campbell



Clare Hartland



Suky Jagpal



Chris Moore



Rachel Pottrill



Luke Tilt



Fay Vaughan

Belle Vale • Halesowen North • Hasbury • Highfields • Pedmore • Windmill Hill • Wollescote

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Here are some useful numbers to get in touch

HALESOWEN HOUSING TEAM

• 01384 811908 • HalesowenHEC@dudley.gov.uk

Community Housing Team Manager

• 01384 812434

Dudley Council Plus

• 0300 555 2345

To report a repair

• 0300 555 8283

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-and-improvements>

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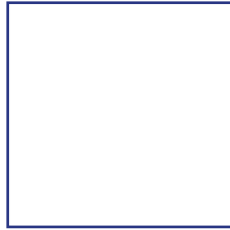
• 0300 555 2345

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How to get Involved

• 01384 815168 • participation@dudley.gov.uk

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY HOUSING TEAM DUDLEY NORTH



Your **DUDLEY NORTH** Housing Team

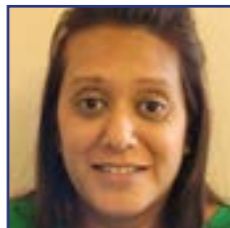


Natasha Cash
Community Housing Team Manager

Your **Community Housing** Officers



Michelle Crockett



Leena Dhokia



Lorenzo Divattimo



Joanne Hayes



Charlotte Partridge



Rukhsana Pervez



Louise Robson



Kindy Whitticase

Coseley • Gornal • Hurst Hill • Gornal Wood • Sedgley • Upper Gornal

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Here are some useful numbers to get in touch

DUDLEY NORTH HOUSING TEAM

• 01384 812996 • NorthDudleyHEC@dudley.gov.uk

Community Housing Team Manager

• 01384 815147

Dudley Council Plus

• 0300 555 2345

To report a repair

• 0300 555 8283

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-and-improvements>

To pay your rent

• 0300 555 7000

To discuss your rent account

• 0300 555 0010 • Incomenorth.dachs@dudley.gov.uk

To speak to the Leaseholder Team

• 01384 815096

To make an application for housing

• 01384 817760

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-options/>

To report a problem with anti-social behaviour

• 0300 555 2345

• <https://customer.dudley.gov.uk/antisocialbehaviour/begin/>

To make a complaint or compliment

• 0300 555 2345

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/complaints/>

How to get Involved

• 01384 815168 • participation@dudley.gov.uk

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY HOUSING TEAM DUDLEY SOUTH



Your **DUDLEY SOUTH** Housing Team



Matthew Cartwright
Community Housing Team Manager

Your **Community Housing** Officers



Chantelle Cunningham



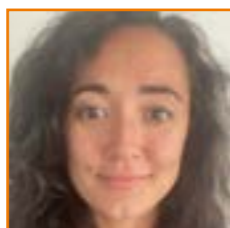
Tracey Hill



Claire Green



Anna Lawrence



Danielle Potter

Bowling Green • Buffery • Darby End • Kates Hill South • Lodge Farm • Netherton • Quarry Bank • Saltwells • Woodside

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Here are some useful numbers to get in touch

DUDLEY SOUTH HOUSING TEAM

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Community Housing Team Manager

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To report a repair

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• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-and-improvements>

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• 01384 815096

To make an application for housing

• 01384 817760

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-options/>

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• <https://customer.dudley.gov.uk/antisocialbehaviour/begin/>

To make a complaint or compliment

• 0300 555 2345

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/complaints/>

How to get Involved

• 01384 815168 • participation@dudley.gov.uk

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY HOUSING TEAM STOURBRIDGE



Your **STOURBRIDGE** Housing Team



Kirstie Young
Community Housing Team Manager

Your **Community Housing** Officers



Donna Ainslie



Kimberley Jones



Sophie Kendrick



Dee McIntosh



Alison Morgan



Michelle Moriarty

Amblecote • Hawbush • Lye • Norton • Stourbridge Town • The Grange • Wollaston • Wordsley

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Here are some useful numbers to get in touch

STOURBRIDGE HOUSING TEAM

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Community Housing Team Manager

• 01384 812264

Dudley Council Plus

• 0300 555 2345

To report a repair

• 0300 555 8283

• <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-and-improvements>

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• 01384 815168 • participation@dudley.gov.uk

**Meeting of the Housing and Safer Communities Select Committee –
22nd January 2024**

**Joint Report of the Director of Housing and Communities and the
Director of Finance and Legal**

Review of Housing Finance

Purpose

1. To present the latest financial forecast outturn for 2023/24 and provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2026/27 (revenue and capital) for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
2. To consult the Select Committee on:
 - a draft HRA budget for 2024/25 in the light of the latest government announcements on housing finance and our latest spending and resource assumptions.
 - a revised Public Sector Housing capital programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27.
 - rents for council homes with effect from 1st April 2024.

Recommendation

3. That the Committee note the latest HRA outturn forecast for 2023/24 (paragraphs 5 - 9 and Appendix 1) and consider and comment on the Cabinet's proposals on 13th December 2023 in relation to:
 - a draft HRA budget for 2024/25 in the light of the latest government announcements on housing finance and our latest spending and resource assumptions (paragraphs 10 - 20 and Appendix 2).
 - a revised Public Sector Housing capital programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27 (Appendix 3).

- rents for council homes with effect from 1st April 2024.

Background

4. The HRA is a ring-fenced revenue account and deals with landlord functions associated with public sector housing. The costs of improvement and programmed maintenance of the Council's housing stock are treated as capital expenditure and are accounted for separately.

HRA Outturn Forecast 2023/24

5. The 2023/24 budget approved by Council on 28th February 2023 forecast a surplus on the HRA of £0.8m at 31st March 2024. This included a 7% rent increase. There are now a number of variations expected to the income and expenditure as shown below and further details are shown in Appendix 1.
6. The balance brought forward from 2022/23 was £5.1m, compared to the £2.2m originally budgeted. This was reported to Cabinet on 6th July 2023.
7. The original 2023/24 budget and the latest forecast for 2023/24 are shown in the following table. The latest forecast shows a deficit of £3.8m leaving a reserves balance of £1.3m at 31st March 2023 as outlined in Paragraph 9.

	Budget 23/24 £m	Forecast 23/24 £m	Variance 23/24 £m
Total income	(98.4)	(98.2)	0.2
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Finance	2.5	2.4	(0.1)
Community Safety	1.4	1.4	0.0
Strategy	2.0	1.9	(0.1)
Management & Admin	8.1	8.4	0.3
Community Housing	11.2	11.5	0.3
Technical adjustments	0.9	1.0	0.1
Responsive and cyclical repairs (Maintenance)	18.4	24.8	6.4
Programmed Investment Works (Development)	8.0	6.0	(2.0)
Depreciation and impairments of fixed assets	25.7	25.2	(0.5)
Interest Payable	17.7	18.0	0.3
Revenue Contribution	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital Expenditure			
Other Expenditure	1.7	1.4	(0.3)
Total expenditure	97.6	102.0	4.4
Total: (surplus) or deficit for the year	(0.8)	3.8	4.6

8. The latest forecast for 2023/24 includes the following key variations to the budget:

- Reduced income due to voids being higher than budgeted, stock sales and profiling £0.7m,
- Increased interest on balances (£0.7m)
- Stock condition survey £3.2m
- Management capacity and expertise £0.8m
- Net recovery revenue works £0.7m
- Total savings from vacancies £0.5m after avoiding a cost pressure of up to £0.8m due to the latest employee offer being higher than the 4% budgeted.
- General inflation costs £0.4m
- Increased borrowing costs due to rising interest rates £0.3m.
- Refund from triannual pension settlement (£0.3m)

9. The impact on HRA balances is shown below:

	Budget £m	Latest Forecast £m
Forecast Balance at 31 March 2023	2.2	2.2
Favourable 2022/23 outturn		2.9
Balance at 31st March 2023	2.2	5.1
Planned addition to balances	(0.8)	(0.8)
Forecast variance against budget 2023/24		4.6
Balance at 31 March 2024	3.0	1.3

10. In addition there are forecast earmarked balances at 31st March 2024, mainly resulting from externally funded grants £2.6m.
11. Inflationary pressures are expected to continue into 24/25 and interest rates are causing an adverse impact on overall budget.
12. Forecast reserve balances are less than budgeted figures for March 2024, and are forecast to stand at 1.4% of income. Across England HRA's with similar income profiles hold an average reserve of 34% of income. Local comparators hold on average a reserve equalling 11% of income.

Rent Increase

13. The self-financing system introduced in April 2012 for Housing assumed that rent increases would be in line with government guidance at the time relating to social housing rents: that is, a maximum increase of September CPI plus 1%. September CPI as announced on 18th October was 6.7% which would allow weekly rents to be increased by 7.7% compared to 2023/24 levels.
14. Last year the Government conducted a consultation on proposed rent caps for social landlords, the outcome of that consultation was announced in the Autumn Statement and introduced a rent cap increase of 7% for 2023/2024, no such rent cap is proposed for 2024/2025.

15. It is proposed that the full rent increase of 7.7% is implemented to partly mitigate the impact of inflationary increases on pay, utilities and the cost of borrowing along with the outcomes of the Stock condition Survey. Paragraph 18 illustrates the impact of a 7.7% rent increase.
16. The current average rent for 2023/24 is £89.33, the proposed increase of 7.7% for 2024/25 will move average rents to £96.21 an average increase of £6.88 per week.

Year	Rent increase %	Average weekly rent	Weekly Increase on 22/23
2024/25	+7.7%	£96.21	£6.88

Service Charges

17. In February 2023 council approved the introduction of service charges at a nominal rate of £5.20 a week. It is now proposed service charges are introduced at full cost recovery, on average this will be £12.46 per week for tenants in homes with communal areas.

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/2025 to 2026/2027

18. Inflationary pressures are expected to continue into 2024/25, with assumed pay awards of 4% for 2024/25 and 2% thereafter. Borrowing costs are expected to remain high in the short term and utility prices are assumed to increase in line with inflationary increases.
19. The proposed draft HRA budget for 2024/25 to 2026/27 is shown in Appendix 2. This budget is based on implementing the maximum allowed 7.7% rent increase, and service charges at direct cost recovery, which would take effect from 1st April 2024, and building in additional resources to meet inflationary pressures.
20. A number of savings and growth proposals were prepared and prioritised before being presented at the HRA budget summit on 22nd November. These proposals are outlined in the following table.

	24/25 £m	25/26 £m	26/27 £m
Base budget deficit + / Surplus (-)	(6.4)	(4.7)	(1.6)
Proposed Savings			
Reduction in sub-contractor costs through reduced usage, reduced material usage and greater financial controls	(0.2)	(0.3)	(0.3)
Housing Maintenance Team staffing savings - vacant posts	(0.8)	(1.1)	(1.3)
Closure of Asbestos laboratory.	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Asset Management Team Staffing savings - vacant posts	(0.1)	(0.2)	(0.2)
Outsourcing Call Handling Service for Out of Hours Service	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Total Proposed Savings	(1.3)	(1.8)	(2.0)
Unavoidable Additional Spending			
Compliance costs	1.3	0.0	0.0
ICT Improvements including Northgate	0.3	0.0	0.0
Increase in temporary accommodation costs	0.7	0.7	0.8
Total Unavoidable Additional Spending	2.3	0.7	0.8
Additional Spending			
Grounds Maintenance in Communal areas	0.3	0.3	0.3
Cleaning in flatted communal areas	0.7	0.7	0.7
Total Additional Spending	1.0	1.0	1.0
Net Savings and Growth	2.0	(0.1)	(0.2)
Revised deficit (+) / Surplus (-)	(4.4)	(4.7)	(1.8)
Unearmarked Balances b/f	1.3	5.7	10.4
Unearmarked Balances c/f	5.7	10.4	12.2

Estimates, Assumptions & Risk Analysis

21. The proposals in this report are based on a number of estimates, assumptions and professional judgements, which are subject to continuous review:

- i. Outcome of the Stock Condition Survey;
 - ii. that pay inflation does not vary materially from current forecasts;
 - iii. that cash limited non-pay budgets will be managed so as to absorb any price inflation not specifically provided for in 2023/24 and any inflationary pressures in 2024/25 and 2025/26 will be no more than the amount provided for;
 - iv. that borrowing costs remain within existing forecasts;
 - v. that employer contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) are in line with the indicative figures provided pending completion of the triennial review;
 - vi. that there will be no material losses to the Council as a result of loans, guarantees and/or grant clawback;
 - vii. that the savings proposals set out in paragraph 19 will be delivered as planned;
 - viii. that there will be no other unplanned expenditure (including any resulting from demographic, legislative or case law pressures) or shortfalls in income, which cannot be met from reserves.
22. The assumptions set out above are subject to uncertainty. In the event that outcomes are more negative than the assumptions in this report, then action (to reduce levels of expenditure or increase income) may become urgent.

Public Sector Housing Capital Programme

23. In February 2023, a five-year housing public sector capital programme was agreed, which reflected enhanced investment using the HRA's new borrowing flexibility. The five-year capital programme was developed based upon the themes set out within the Council's ten year Housing Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) approved by Cabinet in October 2019. The HAMS details the Council's strategic approach to managing and maintaining our properties, whilst also delivering and providing new homes and housing solutions to help meet the projected levels of social housing need.
24. In light of the changing economic climate and the impact of the 7% rent cap announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement the five year capital programme was reviewed and the amended approach and options

were approved by Cabinet on 28th February 2023. The revised capital programme focused on:

- Ensuring regulatory compliance and building safety
- Ensuring adequate investment in void properties to reduce void loss and meet an acceptable void standard.

During 2023/24 the council commissioned stock condition surveys on 100% of homes to gain a robust and up to date position on property condition and compliance. The stock condition surveys will be completed by March 2024 and the data gathered will be used to inform a new capital investment programme and asset management strategy, ensuring that appropriate planned investment works are delivered in occupied properties to maintain and improve the decent homes position

25. The 100% Stock Condition Survey is also delivering a fully revised EPC certificate for every property we gain access too. This will allow the resetting of the energy performance for all properties and add previously unavailable data to the viability modelling and potential future investment for all properties which will not benefit our tenants or the authority as a long term asset.
26. While we retain our aspirations to build new homes, remodel existing stock and invest in community improvements, we cannot do this at the detriment of our priorities set out above so while we will continue to plan for investment in new homes and remodelling, we do so recognising that these plans will be put on hold until investment in our priorities is complete and until we have realigned our asset management strategy with the themes and priorities identified through surveying all of our homes.
27. The proposed capital programme at Appendix 3 sets out current anticipated spend for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27 based on what is currently known about investment needs. However the five year capital programme will need to be further reviewed following the completion of the stock condition surveys, which may inform a change in programme spend in the first three years. At this stage the programme spend has not been profiled for 2027/28 and 2028/29 as this will need to be informed by longer term investment needs and the robust and up to date property information that the surveys will provide.

Finance

28. This report is financial in nature and relevant information is contained within the body of the report.

Law

29. HRA finances are governed by Section 74-78B and 85-88 in Part IV of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Sections 167-175 in Part VII of the Localism Act 2011 abolish the HRA Subsidy system (Sections 79-84 in Part IV of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) and introduce self-financing. The HRA also has to be mindful of the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities guidance on the operation of the HRA ring-fence published in November 2020.

Risk Management

30. The Corporate Risk Register recognises the risk that the Council may be unable to set and/or manage its budget so as to meet its statutory obligations within the resources available. Uncertainty around inflation, interest rates, and rent cap consultation could have a significant impact on the Councils ability to provide landlord services. In view of the worsening outlook, this risk has been elevated to the maximum rating of 25 (Extreme). The forecasts and proposals in this report improve the outlook. However, significant risks and uncertainties remain. The risk rating will be reviewed in due course once the budget proposals have been finalised.

Equality Impact

31. The proposals take into account the Council's Policy on Equality and Diversity and Equality Impact Assessments will be completed as required where changes to service provision are proposed.
32. This is a financial report concerned with forecasting of income and application of resources. Some areas of proposed expenditure are intended to promote independence and improve quality of life for protected groups.

Human Resources / Organisational Development

33. The employers' flat rate pay offer is (in percentage terms) more valuable at the bottom end of the scale than at the top end, reflecting the fact that the cost of living crisis impacts most severely on low income households.

Commercial / Procurement

34. This report relates to our statutory functions as a social housing landlord and there are no direct commercial implications.

Environment / Climate Change

35. Individual projects and major schemes are assessed for their environmental impact before they commence. The Council is committed to addressing United Nations Sustainable Development Goals including those relating to poverty, health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities.

Council Priorities and Projects

36. This report relates to our statutory functions as a social housing landlord and will contribute to the health, wellbeing, and safety of our tenants. The report supports our aims for Housing summarised in the Council Plan:

- the provision of excellent services for tenants
- offering high quality housing
- supporting vulnerable people



Kathryn Jones
Director Housing and Communities



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List of Background Papers - none

Appendix 1

HRA Budget and Forecast 2023/24

	Budget 2023/24 £m	Latest Forecast 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variance 2023/24 £m	Comment
<u>Income</u>				
Dwelling rents	(96.2)	(95.5)	0.7	Higher void losses budgeted 2%, actual 2.5% -£0.5m, stock profile differences £0.2m
Non-dwelling rents	(0.8)	(0.8)	0.0	No material variance, includes Garage and Shop rents
Charges for services and facilities	(0.2)	(0.2)	0.0	No material variance, includes heating and lighting charges
Contributions towards expenditure	(1.1)	(0.9)	0.2	No material variance, includes leaseholder and tenant recharges
Interest on balances	(0.1)	(0.8)	(0.7)	Increased interest rates 1.5% budgeted, 4% actual, increased capital receipts pooling reserves.
Total income	(98.4)	(98.2)	0.2	
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Finance	2.5	2.4	(0.1)	Vacancies (£0.2m) offsetting pay award impact £0.1m
Community Safety	1.4	1.4	0.0	Vacancies (£0.1m) offsetting pay award impact £0.1m
Strategy	2.0	1.9	(0.1)	Vacancies (£0.1m)
Management & Admin	8.1	8.4	0.3	Harbour dilapidations £0.3m
Community Housing	11.2	11.5	0.3	Vacancies (£0.1m) offsetting pay award impact £0.2m, Utilities inflation £0.2m

	Budget 2023/24 £m	Latest Forecast 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variance 2023/24 £m	Comment
Technical adjustments	0.9	1.0	0.1	Repairs Management centre costs transferred across to Dudley Council Plus and recharged here.
Responsive and cyclical repairs (Maintenance)	18.4	24.8	6.4	Stock condition survey £3.3m, Management capacity and expertise £0.7m, Recovery revenue works £1.6m
Programmed Investment Works (Development)	8.0	6.0	(2.0)	Vacancies and savings identified to fund recovery works
Depreciation and impairments of fixed assets	25.7	25.2	(0.5)	Rebased calculation with adjusted asset lives
Interest Payable	17.7	18.0	0.3	Increasing interest rates on loans 4% budgeted, 6% actual
Other Expenditure	1.7	1.4	(0.3)	Refund from triannual pension settlement
Total expenditure	97.6	102.0	4.4	
(Surplus) / Deficit in year	(0.8)	3.6	4.4	

Appendix 2

HRA Draft Budgets for 2024/25 to 2026/27

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
<u>Income</u>			
Dwelling rents	(101.6)	(102.4)	(102.5)
Non-dwelling rents	(0.8)	(0.8)	(0.8)
Charges for services and facilities	(5.0)	(5.2)	(5.3)
Contributions towards expenditure	(0.9)	(1.1)	(1.1)
Interest on balances	(1.0)	(0.8)	(1.0)
Total income	(109.3)	(110.2)	(110.6)
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Finance	2.8	2.9	2.9
Community Safety	2.3	2.3	2.4
Strategy	2.1	2.1	2.1
Management & Admin	11.3	11.2	11.4
Community Housing	13.1	13.4	13.7
Responsive and cyclical repairs (Maintenance)	17.7	16.2	16.4
Programmed Investment Works (Development)	8.9	9.0	9.2
Depreciation and impairments of fixed assets	26.5	27.0	27.6
Interest Payable	18.6	19.7	21.3
Revenue Contribution Capital Expenditure	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Expenditure	1.7	1.8	1.8
Total expenditure	105.0	105.6	108.8
Surplus (-) / Deficit (+) in year	(4.3)	(4.6)	(1.8)
Surplus brought forward	(1.4)	(5.7)	(10.3)
Surplus carried forward	(5.7)	(10.3)	(12.1)

Appendix 3

Proposed capital programme 2023/24 to 2026/27

	2023/24 latest £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
Responsive and cyclical repairs (Maintenance)	18.5	17.5	18.2	18.9
Programmed Investment Works (Development)	39.5	69.9	74.1	74.5
Total	58.0	87.4	92.3	93.4

Resources

	2023/24 latest £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
Borrowing	0.0	16.3	21.7	41.2
Major repairs reserve	25.1	26.4	26.9	27.5
Usable capital receipts	32.0	43.7	43.7	24.7
Other (grants)	0.9	1.0	0.0	0.0
Grand Total	58.0	87.4	92.3	93.4

Meeting of the Housing and Safer Communities Select Committee on 22nd January 2024

Report of the Director of Housing and Communities

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report - Housing & Communities – Quarter 2 (1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023)

Purpose

1. To present the Quarter 2 Corporate Quarterly Performance report of the financial year 2023/24 covering the period 1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023 and is aligned to the refresh of the 3-year Council Plan 2022-2025 and the impacts of this following the LGA Peer review.

In addition, further data relating to directorate service delivery are included as appendices to the report. This quarter concentrates on Housing & Communities Directorate.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the contents of this report and that any identified performance issues are referred to the relevant Cabinet Member and Service Director.

Background

3. The Quarter 2 performance report provides the committee with progress against the delivery of the 3-year Council Plan priorities and our Future Council Programme:
 - Dudley the borough of opportunity
 - Dudley the safe and healthy borough
 - Dudley the borough of ambition and enterprise

- Dudley borough the destination of choice

The Future Council programme incorporates everything we do, it sits at the heart of the Council Plan enabling our services. The comprehensive programme ensures the council is 'fit for the future'. The programmes key themes are:

- People
- Digital
- Place
- Process
- Financially sustainable

Directorate plans will show the operational activity to deliver the objectives in the Council Plan alongside our other strategies.

Performance Framework

4. **Performance Framework**

The performance reporting framework launched early 2022, monitors performance and progress against the delivery of the Council Plan and sets out the councils approach including:

- Golden thread and hierarchy of plans
- Linking the Borough Vision and Council Plan
- Performance measures and indicators
- Performance reporting and governance
- Annual performance management cycle

Dudley's council priorities and plans are under continual review and need to respond to the changing environment and pressures which we face as a local authority. Dudley's performance approach is inherent in everything we do, and our framework is based on the **Plan, Do, Review, Revise model**.

The council plan cycle is 3 years with Directorate Service Plans being revised annually against the council plan for that year. Reviewing and revising plans allows us to be responsive to developing priorities as well as ensuring we are delivering against the current plan.



Directorate Service Planning

Good service planning is a cornerstone of effective governance and performance management. Services need to plan their strategy and delivery to make sure resources, finances, people, skills and assets are used efficiently.

Our directorate service plans provide an overview of each directorate, setting out their resources, service improvement priorities and how they contribute to delivering the outcomes and priorities outlined in the Council Plan.

They are a vital part of the 'golden thread' which links the council plan and borough vision objectives through to individual annual reviews. They are also a key element of our Corporate Performance Management Framework as they identify the key performance indicators and key initiatives/actions which will allow us to assess our progress against the council plan.

As previously mentioned, Directorate Plans are reviewed annually, however a suitable approach will be agreed to enable Directorate Plans to be updated during the year following a significant change to a service, performance indicator or action. This has been incorporated recently into the performance framework following an audit during the summer 2023.

Directorate service plans are supported by service/team plans. These plans contain details on operational matters and how the overall aims and priorities of the directorate service plan will be delivered.

All directorate plans are available from the directorate pages in Connect.

Benchmarking

In line with the Performance framework as stated in section 4 of this report, an extensive piece of work has been carried out across all directorates to review directorate service plans. These align to the 3-year council plan core priorities and outcomes for this financial year (2023/2024). The review included benchmarking by either using our local data from previous outturns and/or comparing against other authorities.



As a result of this exercise key performance measures and targets have been reviewed and changed accordingly, targets have been removed for this financial year to help us to establish performance baselines for future reporting.

Key Performance Indicators and Summary

5. Overall, there are 38 key initiatives/actions and 5 Corporate KPI's (4 quarterly and 1 annual) being reported on for Housing & Communities. Annual performance measures will be reported at year end.
6. Q2 Performance Summary

The dashboards highlight 4 corporate quarterly measures for Housing & Communities The table below shows the performance summary against target:

Overview: Number of Corporate key performance indicators (KPI's) due for reporting this quarter:

Housing & Communities	★ 0	🟡 0	▲ 4
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The Corporate dashboards attached also compares direction of travel as both short-term and also annual trend comparing Q2 2023-24 to Q2 2022-23.

In relation to the annual trend, for Housing & Communities, there are 1 improved, 0 consistent and 3 worsening trends.

The below Corporate reported performance measures provides a snapshot of where areas of concern (below target) are being monitored closely within the Directorates.

The below target performance measures are reported within our management teams at both service and strategic levels to ensure understanding of the issues and assurances that appropriate actions are being taken to address the issues.

7. Housing & Communities:

- **PI.2027 Satisfaction – way your anti-social behaviour complaint was handled?**

This cumulative result represents all residents and shows 73 residents were satisfied out of 133 who responded to this question.

There has been a large turnover in staff and there has been long term sickness across the team that has affected service delivery. A full review of resources, skills, policies and procedures is ongoing to develop a more responsive, customer focused service going forward.

Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

Service review underway. Cases have been transferred to other officers to manage in the interim.

- **PI.913 Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard**

Performance figures reported in previous years have been based upon stock data which may be incomplete or inaccurate. These data concerns have been the subject of a self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing and significant progress has been made following the Regulatory Notice issued in April 2023. There is an ongoing programme of stock condition surveys currently underway across all DMBC housing stock, and performance figures have been extrapolated from this up to date survey data to provide estimated decency levels of 94.69%. Actual decency levels will be confirmed upon completion of 100% stock condition surveys during Q1 of 2024/25.

Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

Severe CAT1 failures are being dealt with as a repair and issued and completed in line with our repair timelines. Programme being set for all other failures as they come through off the Stock Condition Surveys. Once completed the stock condition surveys themselves will provide an accurate, robust and up to date picture of the condition of all DMBC housing stock, including the number of homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard.



- **PI.1191 Average re-let time for Standard Re-Lets**

Average relet times for standard relets have shown an increase from 49.26 days in Q1 to 56.74 days in Q2. This is below the same period last year when the figure for Q2 was 65.91 days. The relet time for standard voids continues to vary between property types.

Performance for houses shows a decrease from 56.33 days in Q1 to 45.88 days in Q2. For bungalows there has been a decrease from 51.85 to 48.84 days. For maisonettes there has also been a decrease from 59.13 to 53.31 days. For all flats excluding sheltered there has been an increase from 41.89 to 47.05 days. Bedsits excluding sheltered have shown a significant increase from 28.33 to 45.1 days.

The increase is most significant across the sheltered housing properties with sheltered flats increasing from 89 to 186 days, and sheltered bedsits increasing from 36 to 105.8 days. This can be attributed to the ongoing review and refurbishment of our sheltered housing stock.

Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

To help mitigate against the loss of revenue and impact on reputation, all teams involved in the void process continue to review and refine procedures working together to minimise rent loss and void turnaround times.

Work is ongoing to review and refurbish our sheltered housing stock across the borough.

- **PI.1899 Rent Loss - % of potential receipts lost (dwellings)**

The total cumulative rent loss in Q2 equates to £1,126,382.29.

The cumulative rent loss due to voids remains the same as Q1 at 2.28%. This is an increase from 1.95 for the same period last year.

£231,608.15 is directly attributable to void loss where we are carrying out improvement programmes in our sheltered stock or decanting people to facilitate them (84 properties).



£35,928.84 is attributable to properties being used for decant or held for future decant (not as part of the sheltered improvement programme) (19 properties).

£252,652.19 is attributable to 114 properties awaiting an investment decision. It is anticipated that this decision will be approved in January 2024 and that the positive effect of the decision will be evidenced in future performance figures.

As a result of delivering our Asset Management Strategy we will continue to have a certain level of rent loss associated with strategic voids, which will be managed through efficient decision making and project management.

A total of £520,189.18 of rent loss in Q2 (46% of rent loss) is attributable to properties that were at these statuses at the end of the quarter. Routine voids account for the remaining 54% of rent loss, a decrease from 56% in Q1 2022/23. There is opportunity to further reduce rent loss by continuing to improve processes and performance.

Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

The end-to-end voids review continues. With the current focus within the service on stock condition we may see an impact on void loss in the short term as additional checks are undertaken at void stage. Investment decisions have been made on a number of voids during Q2.

8. Key Initiatives / Actions Monitoring

The Directorate Service Plans feature service improvement actions that are updated each quarter to monitor progress. At quarter 2 2023-24, for Housing & Communities, of the 38 actions reported, 9 were completed, 20 were ahead or on target and 9 behind target.

9. Key activities / awards and accreditations

In addition, inclusive to the report, Directorate Service Summary documents provide a detailed account of service delivery for the quarter period. Some key highlights from both directorates are outlined below, for a more detailed account, please refer to the appendix – Quarter 2 Service Summary Sheets for further information.



10. Housing & Communities:

- **Customer Feedback**

A Baseline **Tenant Perception Survey** has been completed. The perception survey is part of a responsibility for all social landlords to carry out a new annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey. This involved external consultants carrying out a telephone survey with over 1000 tenants to gauge their opinion on the Council's housing services. The survey was carried out within timescales and provides a valuable insight into areas of satisfaction and concern from tenants. The learning from the baseline survey will be used to inform the actual survey to be carried in Quarter 4.

- **Asset Management and Building Safety and Compliance**

The team have positively progressed work on the compliance recovery programme and reduced the outstanding BS&C backlog by an overall 84% from the original non-compliant position, this includes 100% of Fire\Risk Assessments being complete, 100% of historical FRA actions being closed down, as well as 298 of the original 300 no access gas sites being accessed.

- **Housing Maintenance**

Contributed positively towards the recovery of building compliance by the introduction of a Damp and Mould dedicated team.

Apprentice Awards sponsored by Jewsons.

Reduced spend on subcontractors.

Reduced spend on materials.

Reduced head count.

Increased staff engagement through staff survey and implementation of improvements utilising feedback.

Baseline TSM survey identified repairs as being the highest performer in customer satisfaction.

Finance

11. There are no direct financial implications in receiving this report

Law

12. There are no direct law implications in receiving this report

Risk Management

13. As part of the new risk management framework approved at audit and standards committee, risk reporting does not sit within performance reporting processes, each directorate develop a risk register for monitoring purposes. However, performance and risk management work in partnership to ensure directorate performance and risk management are monitored accordingly, providing assurance directorates work towards our council priorities.

Equality Impact

14. There are no special considerations to be made with regard to equality and diversity in noting and receiving this report.

No proposals have been carried out.

No proposals have been made, therefore does not impact on children and young people.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

15. There are no specific direct human resource issues in receiving this report. In terms of the Council's sickness level and the management of attendance, the People and Inclusion team continues to work with Directors and Heads of Service to assist and provide support in tackling those areas identified as having high levels of sickness.

Commercial/Procurement

16. There is no direct commercial impact.



Environment/Climate Change

17. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is working to address Climate Change and achieve our Net Zero target by 2030. The council plan also acknowledges the importance of climate change through the 'safe and healthy borough' priority, which through the golden thread is monitored through performance reporting.

Council Priorities

18. The Council Plan and Corporate Performance Management Framework enables a consistent approach for performance management across the organisation, aligning the Council Plan, Borough Vision and Future Council Programme and provides that golden thread between them.

Our Council Plan is built around four key priority areas, and our Future Council programme. The Council Plan is a 3-year '[Plan on a Page](#)'. Each directorate has a directorate service plan that aligns to the priority outcomes that the Council is striving to achieve and includes an assessment of how the service has contributed towards these priorities along with a range of key performance indicators to enable us to keep track of progress.

Performance management is key in delivering the longer-term vision of the Council. Quarterly Corporate Performance Reports are reported and reviewed by Strategic Executive Board, the Deputy and Shadow Deputy Leader and Scrutiny/Select Committees.

This will help to enable the council to deliver the objectives and outcomes of the Council Plan and in turn the Borough Vision.

K. Jones

Kathryn Jones
Director of Housing and Communities

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Appendices

Corporate Quarterly Performance reports - Housing & Communities

Directorate – Q2 (1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023)

Housing & Communities Directorate Service Summary Sheet Q2 2023-24



Corporate quarterly performance management report **2023-24**

Quarter 2 (1 July to 30 September 2023)

Extract of Housing & Communities Directorate

Introduction

This Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report highlights performance for the period 1 June to 30 September 2023. It provides specific information related to corporate performance indicators and key initiatives/actions that link to outcomes in the Council Plan 2022-25. Measuring indicators and actions allows us to monitor progress towards our Borough Vision 2030.

This extract of the full Q2 report relates to the performance measures of the Housing & Communities directorate.

Council plan 2022-25

The Council Plan sets out our priorities and objectives, mapping out our journey to achieving the aspirations of Future Council and the Borough Vision. The plan is refreshed every three years with the current plan being effective from 1 April 2022.

In addition to the Future Council programme at the heart of the plan, the four priorities of the current council plan are:

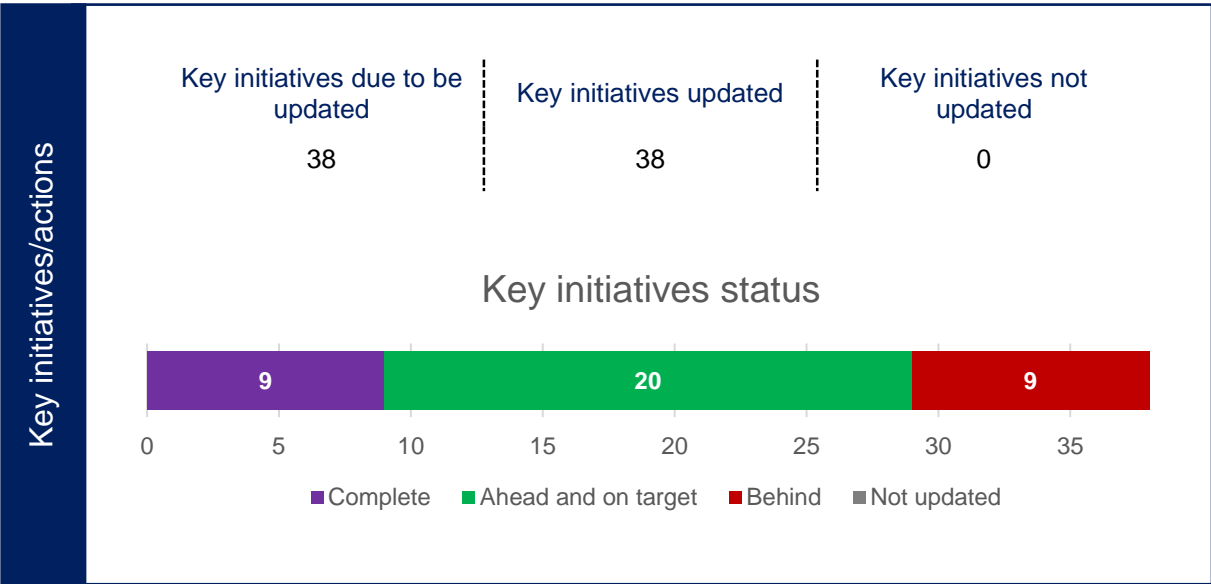
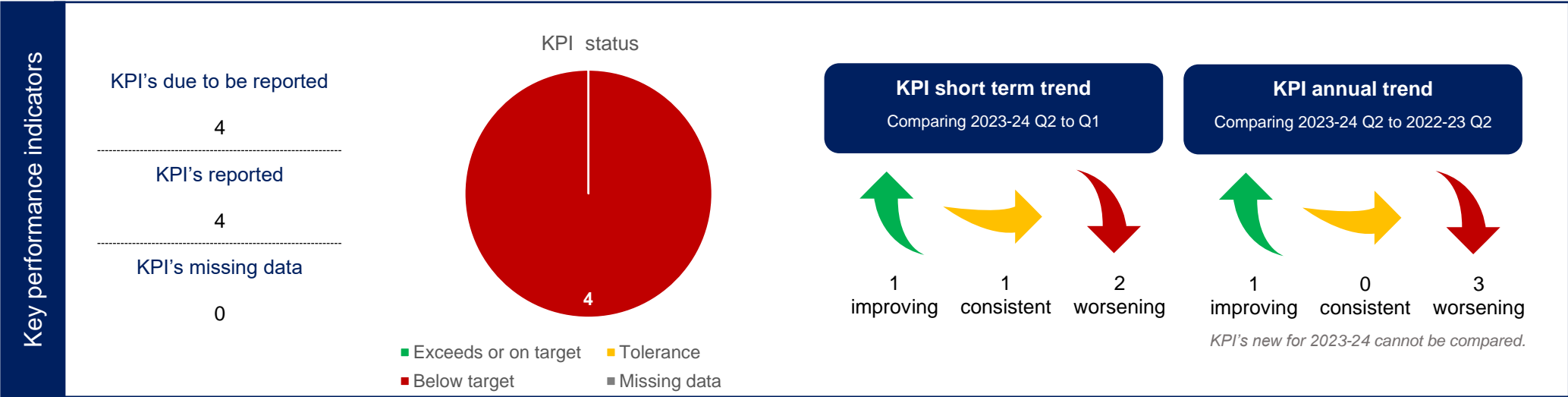
- The borough of opportunity
- The safe and healthy borough
- The borough of ambition and enterprise
- The destination of choice

Further information on the Council Plan can be found on the [dudley.gov.uk council plan pages](https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-plan-pages)



Housing & Communities overview

The following pages provide a dashboard overview for the directorate of Housing & Communities. They show the status of corporate key performance indicators and of key initiatives/actions being delivered. KPI scorecards are used to report and monitor performance outturns for the given quarter along with exception commentary for those measures below target.



Council plan links

The table below provides a breakdown of key initiatives and corporate KPI's by directorate for this financial year including any not due to be reported this quarter.

Council plan priority	Key initiatives	Corporate KPI's
Dudley the borough of opportunity	4	0
Dudley the safe and healthy borough	11	1
Dudley the borough of ambition and enterprise	3	0
Dudley borough the destination of choice	6	4
Future council	14	0
Total	38	5

Housing & Communities scorecard

	Performance Indicator	2022-23				2023-24						Benchmarking comparator data
		Qtr. 1 outturn	Qtr. 2 outturn	Qtr. 3 outturn	Qtr. 4 outturn	Qtr. 1 outturn	Qtr. 2 outturn	Target	Score	Short term trend	Annual trend	
Safe & healthy	PI.2027 Satisfaction - way your anti-social behaviour complaint was handled?	63.1%	65.9%	64.2%	68.1%	59.8%	54.9% (73 / 133)	70%	▲	▾	▾	60.7% (HouseMark Median 2021/22)
Destination of choice	PI.913 RP01 Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	0.41%	0.46%	0.97%	0.58%	8.04%	5.31% (404 / 7,068)	0%	▲	➔	▾	Local measure
	PI.1191 V&L05 Average re-let time for Standard Re-lets.	61.7 days	65.91 days	66 days	60.23 days	49.26 days	56.74 days	40 days	▲	▾	➔	36 days (HouseMark Median 2021/22)
	PI.1899 Rent loss: % of potential rent receipts lost (Dwellings) Non-Acct PI	1.92%	1.95%	1.94%	1.97%	2.28%	2.28% (£1,126,382)	1.8%	▲	➔	▾	1.42% (HouseMark Median 2021/22)

Short term trend compares current quarter with previous quarter within the same year. Annual trend compares the same quarter between years.

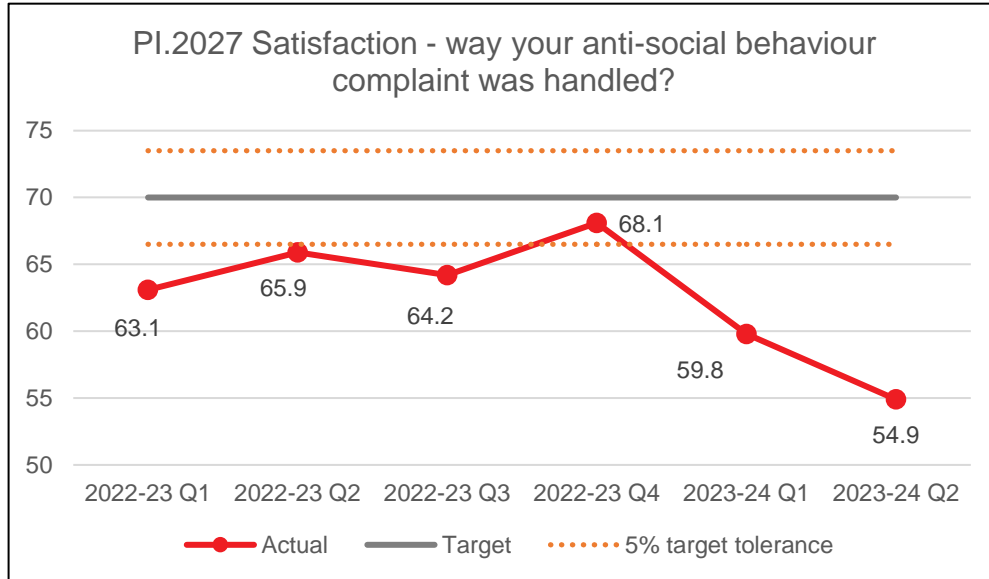
Housing & Communities exception commentary

PI.2027 Satisfaction - way your anti-social behaviour complaint was handled?

PI	2022-23				2023-24				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Quarter 2			
						Outturn	Target	S	T
PI.2027	63.1	65.9	64.2	68.1	59.8	54.9%	70%	▲	▼

Performance: what is the data telling us?

This cumulative result represents all residents and shows 73 residents were satisfied out of 133 who responded to this question.



Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

Cases have been transferred to other officers to manage in the interim.

Impact: what are the issues/risks for service delivery?

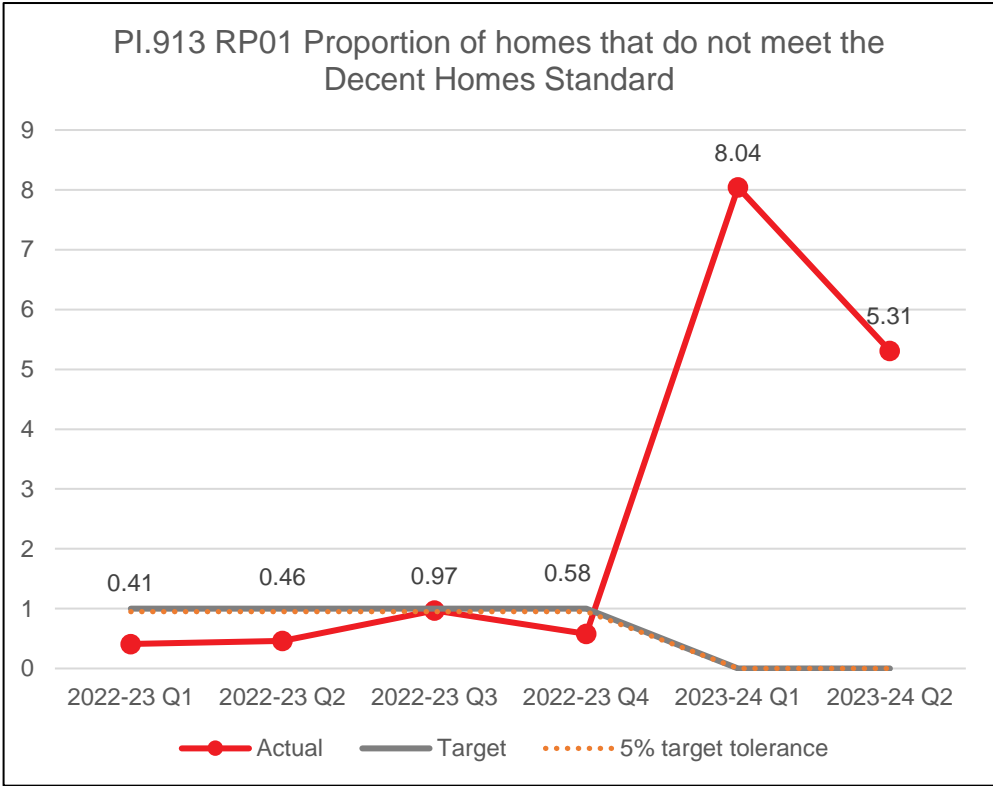
There has been a large turnover in staff and there has been long term sickness across the team that has affected service delivery.

PI.913 RP01 Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard

PI	2022-23				2023-24				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Quarter 2			
					Outturn	Target	S	T	
PI.913	0.41	0.46	0.97	0.58	8.04	5.31%	0%	▲	➔

Performance: what is the data telling us?

Utilising current available Savills SCS data for circa 7608 property surveys which equates to 36.04% of the stock. Where CAT 1 hazards have been identified and are a straightforward decency failure then extrapolating across all the portfolio it has been estimated 94.69% of the stock is compliant to decency standard. As such time as Keystone is overwritten with full SCS information Jun 24 and the move to Northgate Assets is complete then extrapolating of data will not be required.



Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

Severe CAT1 failures are being dealt with as a repair and issued and completed in line with our repair timelines. Programme being set for all other failures as they come through off the SCS.
It is perceived that levels will stay constant.

Impact: what are the issues/risks for service delivery?

The full extent of decency failures and then upload to Northgate Assets will not be known until completion of SCS Jun 24.

PI.1191 V&L05 Average re-let time for Standard Re-Lets

PI	2022-23				2023-24				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Quarter 2			
						Outturn	Target	S	T
PI.1191	61.7	65.9	66.0	60.2	49.2	56.74 days	40 days	▲	▼

Performance: what is the data telling us?

Average relet times for standard relets have shown an increase from 49.26 days in Q1 to 56.74 days in Q2. This is below the same period last year when the figure for Q2 was 65.91 days. The relet time for standard voids continues to vary between property types.

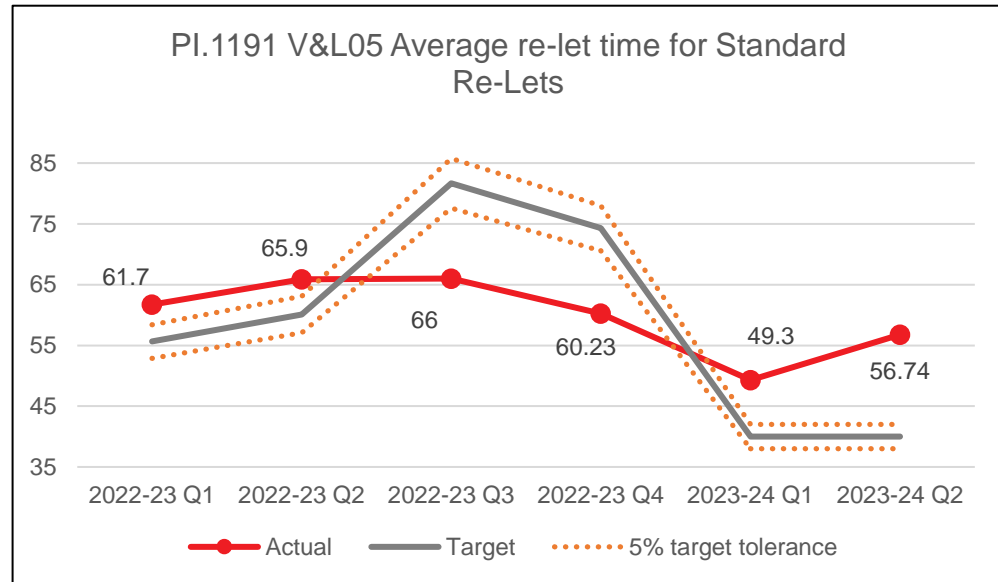
Performance for houses shows a decrease from 56.33 days in Q1 to 45.88 days in Q2. For bungalows there has been a decrease from 51.85 to 48.84 days. For maisonettes there has also been a decrease from 59.13 to 53.31 days. For all flats excluding sheltered there has been an increase from 41.89 to 47.05 days. Bedsits excluding sheltered have shown a significant increase from 28.33 to 45.1 days.

The increase is most significant across the sheltered housing properties with sheltered flats increasing from 89 to 186 days, and sheltered bedsits increasing from 36 to 105.8 days. This can be attributed to the ongoing review and refurbishment of our sheltered housing stock.

Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

All teams involved in the void process continue to review and refine procedures working together to minimise rent loss and void turnaround times.

Work is ongoing to review and refurbish our sheltered housing stock across the borough.



Impact: what are the issues/risks for service delivery?

Loss of revenue. Impact on reputation.

PI.1899 Rent loss: % of potential receipts lost (dwellings)

PI	2022-23				2023-24				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Quarter 2			
						Outturn	Target	S	T
PI.1899	1.92	1.95	1.94	1.97	2.28	2.28%	1.8%	▲	➔

Performance: what is the data telling us?

The total cumulative rent loss in Q2 equates to £1,126,382.29.

The cumulative rent loss due to voids remains the same as Q1 at 2.28%. This is an increase from 1.95 for the same period last year.

£231,608.15 is directly attributable to void loss where we are carrying out improvement programmes in our sheltered stock or decanting people to facilitate them. (84 properties)

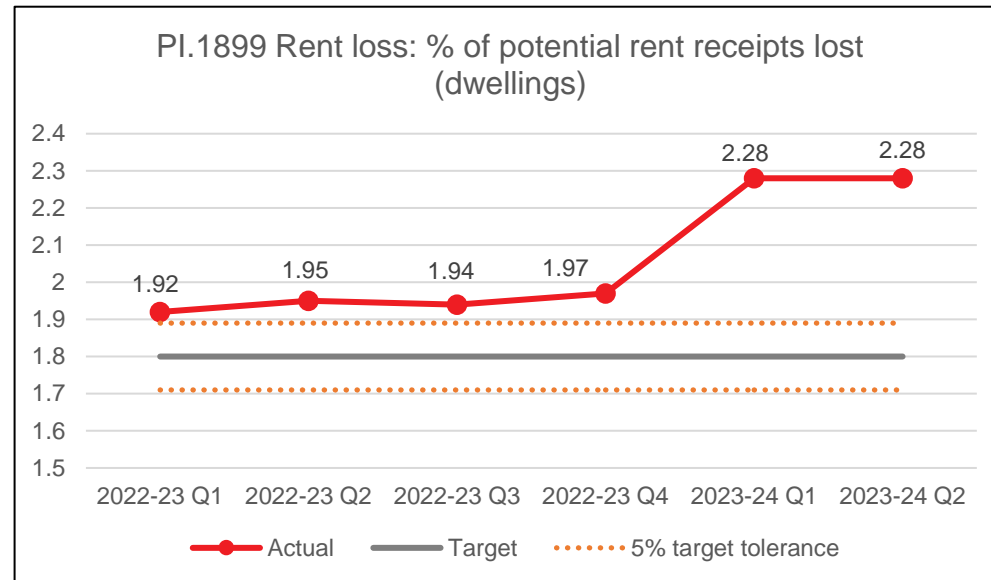
£35,928.84 is attributable to properties being used for decant or held for future decant (not as part of the sheltered improvement programme) (19 properties).

£252,652.19 is attributable to 114 properties awaiting an investment decision.

Therefore a total of £520,189.18 of rent loss in Q2 (46% of rent loss) is attributable to properties that were at these statuses at the end of the quarter.

Assurance: evidence that actions are in place and having an impact

The end-to-end voids review continues. With the current focus within the service on stock condition we may see an impact on void loss in the short term as additional checks are undertaken at void stage. Investment decisions have been made on a number of voids during Q2.



Impact: what are the issues/risks for service delivery?

As a result of delivering our Asset Management Strategy we will continue to have a certain level of rent loss associated with strategic voids, which will be managed through efficient decision making and project management.

We also recognise that routine voids therefore account for over 54% of rent loss, this is a decrease from 56% in Q1 2022/23. There is a significant opportunity to increase our income by improving processes and performance.



Service Summary Sheet

Directorate	Housing and Communities		
Year	2023-24	Quarter	Quarter 2 performance reporting (as at quarter ended 30/09/2023)
Benchmarking with local authorities/nearest neighbours Please consider if a <u>Delivering Better Outcomes proforma</u> should be completed also.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Customer Service Team have visited their colleagues at Sandwell MBC and Wolverhampton Homes to share good practice and begin comparison of initial benchmarking data. They have established that there is an appetite for joint working, including sharing good practice, possible benchmarking and joint training delivery. • The Private Sector Housing Manager has begun approaching other PSH Services locally and nationally with a view to establishing relationships to share good practice and possible benchmarking opportunities. • The Housing Training Team are working with the Chartered Institute of Housing to gain information and access to their established LA Network Groups to pursue possible benchmarking and good practice sharing. • The Community Safety team have close links regionally with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Violence Reduction Partnership and other Local Authorities in the region through attendance at a range of meetings including Heads of Community Safety, OPCC Domestic Abuse Board and its subgroups and the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Board, also attendance at regional DA, EMVAWG and MSHT local authority 'leads' meetings to ensure sharing of best practice and a joined up approach regionally where appropriate. The team also have representation at a range of national community safety themed meetings coordinated by the LGA. 			
Overview of service delivery Include any issues / risk			
<p>Housing Customer Service Team</p> <p>The team have implemented changes to ensure Housing Complaints policy and process are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman code of guidance including changes to the Corporate Complaints Policy. The team have completed and published an annual survey relating to the code of guidance.</p> <p>The team have implemented a new weekly monitoring framework, which involves providing all Heads of Services with a weekly spreadsheet detailing all outstanding customer complaints and MP/Member queries. This is leading to a greater focus on this area of work and reductions in response timescales.</p>			

Housing Fraud

A recent investigation led to the tenant being interviewed under caution for sub-letting his social housing accommodation, it was a 'no comment' throughout. However, working in collaboration with the Criminal Legal Team, this case may be settled outside of Court for a substantial amount of revenue and possession of DMBC stock.

Within this period, 5 properties were recovered and brought back into circulation, thus, enabling those on the waiting list and in genuine need of rehousing to bid for them.

Community Housing Teams

The team have undertaken a review of illegal occupiers/trespassers and are working hard to ensure the occupants are rehoused and properties recovered back into our stock for letting.

Door knocking exercises have taken place in Codele and Highfields with Community Housing Officers visiting customers to discuss and raise the profile of the Saville's stock condition surveys.

Housing teams have undertaken 2 Fraud awareness days where all Community Housing Officers, Fraud Officers and the Customer Involvement Team have visited large numbers of properties to raise awareness of tenancy fraud in Highfields and Chapel Street.

Housing Options

Housing Options have now re-registered over three and a half thousand existing housing register applicants from the Northgate system into Huume – no further re-registrations are being accepted and all applicants going forward are being registered as new applications. the Housing Options team are receiving over 150 new applications a week and are continuing to develop the website and form to best meet our needs.

Community Safety Team

The Community Safety Team continue to support and coordinate the work of Safe and Sound, Dudley's Community Safety Partnership and its subgroups, in addition to 'leading' on a number of work streams

Communications

A significant amount of communications continue to take place with monthly plans for our social media channels and a regular e-bulletin going out to a growing distribution list. Topics covered in Q2 include:

- o Honour-based abuse and forced marriage
- o domestic abuse
- o lighter nights
- o modern slavery
- o personal safety
- o bullying
- o substance misuse
- o online safety
- o domestic abuse

Posters and leaflets around Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime and Modern Slavery continue to be available in 6 of our main community languages (Arabic, Mandarin, Punjabi, Polish, Romanian and Urdu) on request.

'Dudley Have Your Say', a statutory requirement for the partnership to consult with the community and give them the opportunity to meet and ask questions of senior officers from the 5 Responsible Authorities is being planned for March 2024.

Domestic Abuse

- The DA Board continues to implement the DA Act and progress actions identified from the needs assessment and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)
- The updated DA needs assessment has been completed and is in final draft and will be signed off by the DA Board in Q3 and the updated strategy has been drafted, again to be agreed in Q3. The recommendations from these documents will inform the new DA board action plan, along with recommendations from recent and ongoing DHR's
- Risk around amount of active DHR's in terms of capacity and funding. At the end of Q2 there were 4 in progress and one awaiting quality assurance from the Home Office. A DHR Governance Group has now been convened to monitor the actions from the DHRs
- A local MARAC governance group continues to meet to support the restructure of MARAC regionally.
- The 'refreshed' DA and VAWG forum will be meeting in Q3
- The Domestic Abuse training offer continues to be promoted widely and continues to develop further modules and resources – these can be accessed at: <https://blackcountrywa.thinkific.com/pages/dudley-safe-and-sound>

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

- The VAWG group continues to meet and progress their work plan

Modern Slavery

- A Modern Slavery Subgroup has been developed under the safe and sound board, this group has started mapping the borough's response to Modern slavery and human trafficking.
- The DMBC Modern Slavery Statement has been updated and at end of Q2 was awaiting sign off from the Chief Exec, Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition (at time of writing this has now been agreed)
- Modern slavery eLearning continues to be available on the DSPP website, and links can be found to this, and government NRM eLearning (among other useful information) on the safe and sound help hub page <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/modernslavery> In addition multi agency briefing sessions were delivered over teams in Q2 by West Midlands Anti-Slavery network.

Violence prevention

- Work in relation the implementation of the serious violence duty continues and we are on track in respect of this

Prevent

- Significant progress has been made in terms of the Prevent duty with nearly all of the Housing directorate trained and aware of current issues and threats.
- Community Safety Team have supported officers from across the West Midlands area with regards to far-right extremism.

ASB

- Work is ongoing around new PSPOs for the borough, around public places and open spaces, and anti-social vehicle usage.
- Car Cruising legal arguments continue in the high court, but work is on-going within the borough to reduce the risk of harm as a result of car cruising with a zero tolerance approach being adopted by DMBC and Police partners.

Homeless Prevention Resettlement Team

We have had 1358 homeless approaches to the service, this is 50% up on last quarter, at this rate we shall double last year's numbers which was already at an increase. We have made changes to the service to manage this demand but if it continues at this rate we shall have resource issues. However, despite this increase we have maintained low numbers of TA and prevention and relief of

homelessness remains high. This has been achieved in difficult circumstances, with high demand for social housing and low stock availability.

Climate Change

The Housing and Communities Directorate, in conjunction with other government agencies and external energy providers, are currently working on a number of schemes, mostly within the private sector, aimed at increasing sustainability and tackling poor energy efficiency, as detailed within this report.

LA Flexible Eligibility

The ECO4 Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Scheme provides boilers and insulation for vulnerable groups in the private sector. The works are 100% funded by Energy Providers and undertaken by their own contractors. The Council assist in ratifying eligibility for households and the scheme is currently in progress.

Great British Insulation Scheme

The Great British Insulation Scheme is a new government efficiency scheme (formerly known as ECO+) that will be administered by Ofgem. It is designed to deliver improvements to the least energy-efficient homes in Great Britain to tackle fuel poverty and help reduce energy bills within the private sector. This is due to be rolled out shortly.

Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD2)

The LAD2 scheme, completed in June 2022, delivered energy saving work (High heat retention electric Night Storage Heaters, External Wall Insulation and Solar Panels) to 296 local authority owned properties that were previously rated D or below. High heat retention storage heaters are now considered to be an efficient way of providing clean energy that are more controllable and easier to use and over 20% cheaper than standard night storage heaters. The scheme was funded through £1.5M grant paid into the Housing Revenue Account, match funded with £1M from the DMBC Housing Revenue Account.

Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 (LAD3) and Home Upgrade Grants (HUGS1)

£255k of grant funded work to around 50 private sector properties to provide predominantly Cavity Wall and Loft Insulation works together with some ancillary ventilation measures. The programme is currently in progress.

Home Upgrade Grants (HUGS2)

Around £2M worth of funding to deliver 'fabric first' measures to privately owned 'off-gas' properties. This work is being administered and delivered by the West Midlands Combined Authority with the Council entering a Memorandum of Understanding on that basis, and will commence shortly.

Switchee

1,691 smart thermostats have been installed across the borough to assist in reducing energy consumption.

Dudley Energy Advice Line (DEAL)

The DEAL provides energy efficiency and carbon reduction advice for all residents. Historically the service also assisted with energy switches which are slowly returning as energy costs start to reduce. The service signposts people to areas of income maximisation and issues food and fuel vouchers for those in need. The Team also provide energy saving behavioural advice to residents who contact the team with between 3,000 to 3,500 contacts per year.

Housing Assistance Grants

Repayable grant funded works to poor and vulnerable homeowners, subject to eligibility where the work is identified as being required to eradicate a hazard to health and/or safety in accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System via the Council's own grant process.

Available throughout the year, works include but are not limited to boiler installations, roofing works, doors, and windows. Some urgent low-cost minor repairs are also provided to those that are non-repayable. Again, this is subject to eligibility.

Net Zero Neighbourhood (NZN) programme

Demonstrator programme to identify, survey and provide net-zero retro-fit measures to up to 50 properties within Brockmoor. £1.65M of grant match funded with £1M of Better Care funding. A £42,000 contribution has also been received from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) which has been added to the NZN pot. Further funding opportunities are being investigated including provision of ECP's, Heat Pumps and improvement to green space. Resident consultation will take place through the programme.

The Council have identified a framework contract that will enable the appointment of a 'one-stop' provider to facilitate all feasibility, consultancy and design work together with the on-site delivery of the project with a brief to work towards phase 2 of the project.

A preferred bidder has been identified and bespoke contractual terms and conditions have been drafted. In the meantime the preferred provider has been undertaking preparatory work 'at risk' alongside the Council to ensure that a good start is made when the contracts are exchanged, and the Council have not incurred any costs to date.

Engagement will start in the Autumn followed by monitoring during the winter and measures undertaken in Spring 2024 with a view to complete by the backstop date of March 2024.

The scheme will also involve a mobility and transport assessment, a small community greenspace project and a strategy for the local school.

Housing Maintenance

The housing maintenance service is ceasing utilisation of high spend contractors with works being brought back into the internal workforce where possible.

Commenced transformation project to

- Support the implementation of new IT system
- Implement better and more efficient ways of working
- Support recovery of building compliance
- Evidence vfm for maintenance to ensure regulatory notice is removed
- Review of Out of Hours service arrangements to reduce costs whilst providing a more comprehensive service
- Introduce H&S Performance meetings for Housing Directorate
- Review of working times and practices
- Review of material usage, costs and specifications
- Review of contract arrangements with high spend contractors.
- Review of fleet arrangements to improve efficiencies
- Produce first draft procurement strategy for Property Services
- Redrafted Repair Responsibilities document to reduce unnecessary works and bring in line with industry norms
- Commenced review of policies to ensure they align with regulatory requirements and TSM's

Private Sector Housing Team

The Private Sector Housing Manager has completed a draft Damp and Mould Action Plan, which is a requirement from the Secretary of State for DLUHC. The action plan will provide greater focus for this area of work including training, and advice for tenants and landlords.

Asset Management and Development and Building Safety

The Building Safety and Compliance team have set up the following key activities to ensure great transparency of building compliance:

- Introduced a weekly certificate and asset reconciliation activity.
- The introduction of a new single BS&C asset management team who manage and validate all certification.
- The development of site inspection surveys that feed directly into C365

- The team have undertaken a significant overhaul of the contract supply chain to standardise and improve delivery from the contractors.
- Improvement in contractor billing processes have allowed greater challenge and improved contractor cost recovery.
- The BS&C team have worked to develop a full suite of BS&C documents which form the revised BS&C Policy framework for the authority.
- The BS&C team are working with the Housing team to implement a new access process which will see the access timeline reduce to 35 days across all compliance activities.

The Asset management and Development team have delivered and completed the following key tasks:

- Revised the supply chain to deliver the aids and adaptation in a more compliant manner and to an increased number of units
- Phase two of the SCS exercise has been successfully rolled out and the communication process has been adapted to reflect the no access rate
- Jack Newell and Woodhouse Court Sheltered and Supported schemes have been handed over and residents are now beginning to occupy the properties.
- The asset team have been managing the asset viability process at every void property which exceeds the threshold of viable investment, this has identified savings of £2.5m of investment in assets which was not required

Service achievements

Report of any external accreditation, awards, positive publicity, during the past quarter

A Baseline **Tenant Perception Survey** has been completed. The perception survey is part of a responsibility for all social landlords to carry out a new annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey. This involved external consultants carrying out a telephone survey with over 1000 tenants to gauge their opinion on the Council's housing services. The survey was carried out within timescales and provides a valuable insight into areas of satisfaction and concern from tenants. The learning from the baseline survey will be used to inform the actual survey to be carried in Quarter 4.

Asset Management and Building Safety and Compliance

The team have positively progressed work on the compliance recovery programme and reduced the outstanding BS&C backlog by an overall 84% from the original non-compliant position, this includes 100% of Fire\risk assessments being complete, 100% of historical FRA actions being closed down, as well as 298 of the original 300 no access gas sites being accessed and no compliant.

Housing Maintenance

Contributed positively towards the recovery of building compliance by the introduction of a Damp and Mould dedicated team.

Apprentice Awards sponsored by Jewsons.

Reduced spend on subcontractors.

Reduced spend on materials.

Reduced head count.

Increased staff engagement through staff survey and implementation of improvements utilising feedback.

Baseline TSM survey identified repairs as being the highest performer in customer satisfaction.

Opportunities for improvement

Information relating to service complaints / compliments and learning from these

Private Sector Housing Team

A new PSH Manager has been appointed who will be undertaking a full internal review of the team, policies and procedures. The PSH Manager will be assisted in the review by other members of the Housing Strategy Team. The review will take account of the internal audit of the service published earlier in the year.

Customer Service Team

The team are working with neighbouring organisations to improve processes and procedures in the delivery of services. An internal review specifically of MP/Member queries is to be undertaken.

Asset Management and Development and Building Safety

The assets team have been reviewing the planned investment programme, it has identified that unphased programming of works have caused significant negative impact on investment dates. The teams are working to reprofile the planned works to improve delivery to the customers and best financial return to the authority.

Housing Maintenance

All areas of Maintenance are being reviewed and overhauled to implement industry standard working practices to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and to demonstrate vfm.

A number of areas have been identified which are duplicated across the Council and a project is now being commenced to look at the opportunities for the centralisation of duplicated working areas, contracts, services and teams.

Housing Options

The new Huume system allows for the service to be more adaptive and responsive to the needs of the business, a administrators group has been formed across the teams using the system to work on development and change.

Any additional information relating to performance

Performance Management

The Housing Performance Team are working on being easily able to transfer data from Spectrum to Power BI for the purposes of Performance Management meetings. Power BI is visually a better platform to present performance data on.

Asset Management and Development and Building Safety

The level of transparency now available on the performance of Decent Homes, EPC ratings, BS&C performance has vastly improved as a result of the SCS exercise, and the huge influx of fresh and real-time data being fed into the business.

The revised implementation programme surrounding C365 and the refreshing of the Keystone and work around Northgate has provided greater clarity and assurance around the core asset and BS&C data sets allowing for easier and more reliable reporting from these and other sources

Housing Maintenance

Whilst implementing reductions in multiple areas of resources, the overall performance of the service has been maintained at a steady level. Ceasing the utilisation of contractors on voids has resulted in the start of a back log, this will be addressed by diverting internal resources.

Housing and Safer Communities Select Committee
Progress Tracker and Future Business

Subject (Date of Meeting)	Recommendation/action	Responsible Officer/Area	Status/Notes
Programme of Meetings and Business Items for 2023/24 – 20 th July, 2024	<u>Agenda Item No. 6(2)</u> That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide Members of the Committee regular updates on progress on the stock condition survey.	Director of Housing and Communities	Ongoing – regular updates to be provided
	<u>Agenda Item No. 6(5)</u> That the Director of Housing and Communities, supported by the Democratic Services Officer, be requested to consider the possibility of providing Members the opportunity to allow more detailed scrutiny of the housing stock within the Borough.	Director of Housing and Communities/ Democratic Services Officer	Consideration at the agenda setting meeting on 25 th October, 2023 and agreed to included in the 2024/25 Annual Scrutiny Programme to allow for a more in-depth scrutiny of the item.

	<p><u>Agenda Item No. 6(6)</u> That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to incorporate a community safety element to each report programmed for the Committee for the municipal year.</p>	Director of Housing and Communities	Ongoing
Progress Tracker and Future Business – 13 th September, 2023 and 20 th November, 2023	<p><u>Minute No. 12(3)</u> That an update be provided to Members of the Committee at a future meeting on information in relation to private rented housing.</p>	Director of Housing and Communities	Report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee
	<p><u>Minute No. 12(4)</u> That an update be provided to Members of the Committee at a future meeting on the work associated with the Stock Condition Survey programme that Savills was currently undertaking on all Council housing stock.</p>	Director of Housing and Communities	Report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee
	<p><u>Minute No 27(2)</u> That responses provided to Members of the public be circulated to all Members of the Committee.</p>	Democratic Services Officer	Reponses circulated to all Members on 30 th November, 2023

Public Forum – 20 th November, 2023 – Questions by Mr R Parmley	<u>Minute No. 23(1)</u> In referring to the minutes of the meeting held on 13 th September, 2023, which referred to the Tenant Housing Board and Dudley Housing Board, could clarification be provided on what the Board was now called?	Director of Housing and Communities	Written response provided on 21 st November, 2023 and circulated to Members on 30 th November, 2023
	<u>Minute Number. 23(2)</u> What was happening to high-rise forums? There did not appear to be a group that focused on the needs of high-rise properties.	Director of Housing and Communities	Written response provided on 21 st November, 2023 and circulated to Members on 30 th November, 2023
	<u>Minute Number. 23(3)</u> In referring to information contained in the Quarterly Corporate Performance reports, the number of properties awaiting investment decisions had increase from 50 to 90 properties. A number of questions in relation to the matter were as follows:- (a) What was happening to those properties? (b) What was required to bring the properties back into use? (c) Out of the 90 properties waiting investment decisions, what type of properties were they? It was	Director of Housing and Communities	Written response provided on 21 st November, 2023 and circulated to Members on 30 th November, 2023

	<p>considered that those properties were creating significant financial implications for the Local Authority and were in high demand so why were they being held back for investment decision.</p> <p>(d) What had been spent on properties awaiting investment decisions over the last 20 years.</p>		
<p>Tenant Satisfaction Measures – Tenant Perception Survey – 20th November, 2023</p>	<p>Minute No. 25(2) That “Know Your Community Housing Officer” posters for each of the six areas of the Borough be re-circulated to Members of the Committee.</p>	<p>Democratic Services Officer</p>	<p>Know Your Community Housing Officer posters re-circulated to all Members of the Committee on 1st December, 2023</p>

Future Business 2023/24

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Work Programme</u>	<u>Responsible Officer/Area</u>	<u>Notes</u>
22 nd January, 2024	Community Safety Partnership including Anti-Social Behaviour	Kathryn Jones	Report
	Neighbourhood Model	Kathryn Jones	Report
	Review of Housing Finance	Kathryn Jones/Ian Grosvenor	Report
	Quarterly Corporate Performance Report	Richard Cartwright	Report
	Action Tracker and Future Business	Karen Malpass	Report
13 th March, 2024	Annual Report 2023/24 and potential items of business for 2024/25	Karen Malpass	Report
	Review of Private Rented Sector	Kathryn Jones	Report

	Contractor Management	Kathryn Jones	Report
	Quarterly Corporate Performance Report	Richard Cartwright	Report
	Action Tracker and Future Business	Karen Malpass	Report