
EAST KENT HOUSING – HALF-YEAR REVIEW

To: **Corporate Performance Review Working Party – 30th September 2015**

By: **Brendan Ryan – Chief Executive, East Kent Housing**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All wards**

Summary: **This report provides some background to the setting up of East Kent Housing, a shared service with Canterbury, Dover and Shepway Councils. Key performance areas are analysed and future plans and projects are identified in the Delivery Plan.**

For Information

1.0 Background

- 1.1 East Kent Housing was set up as a shared housing service in April 2011. It remains the only such arrangement in the country. The ALMO (arm's length management organisation) model was used as a convenient governance model as it was an arrangement widely used by other councils to manage their councils housing, it was a model accepted and understood by government and it meant that all four councils were equal parties to the service rather than it being a hosting arrangement. Another benefit of the ALMO model was that it gave tenants greater involvement in managing the service. The original objectives in setting up a shared housing service included, building capacity and resilience in the service, improving the quality of the service received by residents, providing tenants with a greater say in how the service was run and achieving efficiency services.
- 1.2 East Kent Housing is run by a Board, which is made up by a nominated Councillor from each District, a tenant represented from each area (selected by the local representative body) and four Independent members.
- 1.3 Like all other social housing providers, EKH (& the council as the landlord) is subject to regulation and standards set by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Since the abolition of the Audit Commission there has been greater focus on "Co-regulation" requiring Boards to take responsibility for maintaining the required standards and providing a role for tenants to scrutinise their service provider.

2.0 Performance

- 2.1 A detailed quarterly performance report is provided to each Council and reported to the Area Boards and Service Improvement sub-committee of the EKH Board. The 2014/15 year end performance report is appended, along with the quarter one report for the current year. The performance targets are agreed with the four councils each year in line with the requirements of the Management Agreement. This year's targets can be seen in the quarter one performance report (appended). Performance in the key areas is highlighted below. Improvements need to be made in the delivery of the planned maintenance (Capital) improvements, where only 73% of the programme was spent last year but elsewhere there has been consistent improvement in performance during EKH's time.

The five key areas of performance are:

2.2 Rent collection/arrears

	Total rent arrears	Arrears as % of annual debit
April 2011	£262,564	2.44%
April 2014	£211,478	1.67%
April 2015	£205,028	1.58%

2.3 Average Re-lets times

	Routine voids	All voids
April 2011	20.29 days	30.37 days
April 2014	13.9 days	24.71 days
April 2015	12.64 days	25.23 days

2.4 Repairs

The most critical performance measure is the annual servicing of gas appliances in tenants' homes. Failure to maintain high performance in this area could put tenants' lives at risk and prompt intervention from the regulator. Invariably failure to achieve 100% is due to access problems.

	% of properties with valid gas safety certificate at year end
April 2011	97.7%
April 2014	100%
April 2015	99.3%

Day to day repairs are carried out by Mears on behalf of the councils. There are a large number of performance measures applied to the contract, including repairs completed within specified timescales, tenant satisfaction, and % of appointments kept.

Tenant satisfaction with repairs is invariably very high around 99%. This is unlikely to reflect a true measure of satisfaction but reflects the way in which satisfaction surveys are collected. i.e. by the operative. We are working with Mears to identify better methods of measuring satisfaction.

	% emergency repairs completed in time
April 2011	100%
April 2014	100%
April 2015	99.71%

2.5 Capital programme improvements

	% of capital programme spend during year
April 2011	79.84%
April 2014	82.74%
April 2015	73.68%

This is an area where improvements need to be made and steps are being taken to improve and streamline procurement processes to increase expenditure. A substantial part of the 2014/15 underspend was due to a re-evaluation of options for lift replacements in the tower blocks and the consolidation of small environmental improvements into a single scheme.

2.6 Customer Satisfaction

Tenant satisfaction is measured using the STAR survey template, a national format for tenant satisfaction surveys. Surveys were carried out in 2012 and again in 2015. In both surveys satisfaction with the overall housing service was 89% which is around upper quartile (i.e. within the best 25% of landlords). Satisfaction with “the neighbourhood as a place to live” is lower in Thanet than in other areas (79%) but has improved during the last three years. We intend to make the measurement and tracking of customer satisfaction a more prominent performance measure and have created a new post of Customer Insight Officer in our resident engagement team to develop a more robust approach to measuring tenant perceptions of the service provided by EKH.

3.0 Delivery Plan

The annual Delivery Plan is agreed with the four councils and tenant representatives and sets out tasks and projects to improve service or efficiency. Copies of the 2014/15 and 2015/16 plans are appended to this report.

Key priorities in the forthcoming year include implementing a new IT system that will allow a more consistent approach across all four areas; thereby creating opportunities for greater efficiencies; reviewing a number of policy areas so that a consistent approach can be recommended to the councils, again with the intention of improving efficiency; reviewing the asset management/repairs service using lean systems thinking; implementing the recommendations of the leasehold service review; and preparing for the introduction of Universal Credit.

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Annex List

Annex 1	Annual Performance Report 2014/15
Annex 2	2014/15 year end performance report
Annex 3	Quarter one (15/16) performance report
Annex 4	2014/15 Delivery Plan
Annex 5	2015/16 Delivery Plan