

Tenant and Leaseholder Services - Quarter 4 performance report

Cabinet	29 July 2021
Report Author	Sally O'Sullivan, Tenant and leaseholder Services Manager
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Jill Bayford, Cabinet member for Housing and Community Services
Status	For Information
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Reasons for Key	N/A
Ward:	Thanet Wide

Executive Summary:

This report provides members of the Cabinet information about the performance of the Tenant and Leaseholder Services (TLS) during quarter 4 2020/21.

This report was previously considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 25 May 2021.

Recommendation(s):

Members are asked to:
Consider and comment on the contents of the report.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Corporate

The decision to bring housing management and maintenance services back in house was to improve services provided to the councils tenants and leaseholders, to ensure that the service is more accountable to members and open to scrutiny from tenants and leaseholders. This specifically supports the council's service ambitions, as set out in its published Corporate Statement.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -
(Delete as appropriate)

- *To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
- *To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it*
- *To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.*

The council's tenants and leaseholders include residents that have protected characteristics as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty.

An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed and published when the decision was taken to bring housing management and maintenance services back in house. The assessment identified positive impacts for tenants and leaseholders with physical disabilities. No negative impacts were identified.

Any changes or improvements considered to the service, following go live on 1 October 2020 will be subject to further Equalities Impact assessments.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- *Communities*

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Since transition in October 2020 of East Kent Housing services in-house, the new Tenant and Leaseholder Services (TLS) team have shown improved performance in many areas. Factors contributing to improved performance include, empowerment of officers and improved communication with all stakeholders.
- 1.2 The report also highlights areas of improvement and how we intend to approach these.
- 1.4 Since transition, health and safety compliance has been a high priority and we have been working closely with the Regulator for Social Housing. The council's agreed

tenant and leaseholder health and safety policies state that the position in relation to compliance will be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

2.0 Supporting documentation

- 2.1 The service performance is detailed in three annexes to this report. They show performance metrics for operational performance, customer satisfaction and landlord compliance. The commentary provides some explanation to the performance indicators and how we are tackling areas of unsatisfactory performance.
- 2.2 Annex 1 and 2 show a detailed update in service performance for the quarter from 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021 and a summary of the key performance indicators, respectively.
- 2.3 Annex 3 provides information on tenant and leaseholder health and safety compliance, covering the period to 31 March 2021.

3.0 Staff empowerment

- 3.1 50% of our team transferred from East Kent Housing (EKH) and 50% were recruited into the council. Much of the talent we recruited externally was from outside the social housing sector and many transferring staff felt deskilled in their roles at EKH.
- 3.2 To empower our staff, we must give them the right tools and therefore our team has undergone a vast amount of training since transition. This has included:
 - Extensive landlord compliance training in the 6 major work streams
 - Specialised technical training in asset management, housing management and income recovery. Delivered internally and by an external supplier
 - Access to best practice networks
 - All team training in customer service, political awareness, coping with change emotional intelligence
 - Other training includes complaint response writing, policy writing, report writing and housing regulation
 - Specific professional training,
 - Three apprentices recruited into the team.
- 3.4 We recognise that different teams have different priorities which may at times be conflicting. Part of the work to integrate the new service into the council is about removing barriers to good communication and cross service working that existed when the tenant and leaseholder service was provided by EKH. The team are making good progress in this area and we have seen some good examples of joint working for example between housing management officers, our housing development team and housing options officers.
- 3.6 As we come out of lockdown, it is hoped that we can organise some face to face team building to further bond our new team.

4.0 Resident Involvement

- 4.1 Since coming in house, our residents have shown us significant support. We have a record number of residents wanting to be involved and many new members on our Thanet Tenant and Leaseholders Group (TTLG).
- 4.2 The TTLG has added untold value to the teams performance, for example shown us areas to improve our service that we did not realise required attention, offered suggestions, carried out mystery shopping, tested surveys, give their experience of poor performance so we can see how best we can improve, support our reports of poor contract performance with their own experience.
- 4.3 The Resident Involvement team is developing a much greater understanding of the needs and priorities of tenants and leaseholders and to identify a wider range of opportunities for people to become involved in the service.

5.0 ICT

- 5.1 The Northgate Housing System is now hosted in the Cloud and each of the four councils has had their data separated so we are now working from our own system. The Digital Team is now working on our much required upgrade, which will offer us improved functionality within our housing management system. Our ambition, once upgraded, is to enable greater mobile working in the team, supported by the right technology to improve officer efficiency.
- 5.2 The upgraded version of Northgate will also offer us the opportunity to record workflows through the system. This will give us improved reporting capability to monitor performance by. We also plan to explore enabling greater customer access online.
- 5.3 A further area for digital improvement is the procurement of a single landlord compliance system that will hold all data and workflow across all compliance workstreams. We have developed a specification for our requirements and will be starting and exercising for procurement shortly.
- 5.4 The new system will allow us to drive compliance programmes using the system rather than manual tracking spreadsheets, gives functionality for high level performance reporting in real time and to drill down into the detail where required. This will give us increased confidence in our data and reporting and reduce incidence of human error.

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Annex List

- Annex 1: The TLS quarter 4 operational performance report.
- Annex 2: The TLS operational performance summary

Annex 3: Landlord compliance report for the period to 31 March 2021.

Background Papers

NA

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell (Director of Finance)

Legal: Estelle Culligan (Director of Law and Democracy)