

---

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 10</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2011</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>RICHARD KNOTT PERFORMANCE &amp; BUSINESS MANAGER Ext 5940</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE HOUSEMARK BENCHMARKING EXERCISE / INVESTORS IN EXCELLENCE</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS01</b>

---

## **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 Members note Housing Services' performance compared to other Local Authorities taking part in the 2009/10 English Local Authority Housing Sector Benchmarking Exercise conducted by Housemark.

## **2. Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To summarise to Members the main findings of the 2009/10 Local Authority Housing Sector Benchmarking Report.

## **3. Detail**

- 3.1 Housing Services is a member of the Housemark organisation, which is a not-for-profit organisation, dedicated to improving housing standards. It is jointly owned by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and the National Housing Federation (NHF) and is the social housing sector's leading provider of performance improvement services.
- 3.2 Some 400+ housing organisations are members of Housemark and submit performance information on a regular basis in order that they can compare their performance with peers. In addition Housemark itself carries out an annual benchmarking exercise with volunteer member organisations to determine overall cost levels, management costs, costs of delivering specific services, performance and customer satisfaction. The collated data is presented in a final report where comparisons are made to other Local Authorities in England. South Derbyshire District Council Housing Services participated by submitting data for the 2009/10 financial year.
- 3.3 39 Local Authorities volunteered to participate in the benchmarking exercise this year. It is likely that only those who perceive their performance to be good volunteer i.e. potential volunteers will be wary about showing their organisation in a bad light.

- 3.4 Performance, satisfaction and costs were compared across some 38 different measures. South Derbyshire District Council performance was above average in 35 out of the 38 indicators and upper quartile in 25 out of the 38 measures.
- 3.5 The measures in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile were overhead costs as a % of turnover, overhead costs as a % of direct costs, central overhead costs, days lost to sickness, cost of tenant involvement, % of emergency and urgent repairs, void property contractor costs, the number of non-decent homes, the number of valid gas safety certificates and void rent loss.
- 3.6 The 3 indicators in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile were finance costs, the SAP rating of our properties and tenancy turnover.
- 3.7 In a number of measures our performance is amongst the very best in the country. Some of the highlights are listed below:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Position</b>
Staff turnover	2.5%	3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest
Tenant satisfaction with staff being able to deal with their problem	84.2%	3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest
Direct costs (including DLO costs, non-pay costs and employee costs) per property for responsive repairs and voids re-servicing	£396	2 <sup>nd</sup> lowest
The cost of repairs management per property	£34	4 <sup>th</sup> lowest
The contractor cost of delivering the repairs service per property	£254	9 <sup>th</sup> lowest
Satisfaction with the responsive repairs service	86.3%	5 <sup>th</sup> highest
Average time to complete repairs	6 Days	6 <sup>th</sup> lowest
The management cost involved in re-letting empty properties per property	£12	5 <sup>th</sup> lowest
Costs of cyclical maintenance per property	£1087	9 <sup>th</sup> lowest
Management costs of providing the improvements service per property	£25	3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest
The contractor cost of major repairs per property	£591	4 <sup>th</sup> lowest
The direct cost of providing overall housing management per property	£110	The lowest cost provider
Overall satisfaction with the home	88.1%	5 <sup>th</sup> highest
Average re-let time	22 days	3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest
The cost of rent collection activities per property	£46	5 <sup>th</sup> lowest
Percentage of rent arrears	1.24%	4 <sup>th</sup> lowest

- 3.8 Other upper quartile indicators include office costs, IT spend per employee, satisfaction with complaint handling and the outcome of complaints, satisfaction with views being taken into account, opportunity to participate, cost of estate services, satisfaction with the neighbourhood and the cost of anti-social behaviour activities.
- 3.9 Direct costs (including DLO costs, non-pay costs and employee costs) per property for responsive repairs and voids re-servicing were returned at £396 per property, which was ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in the whole country. This demonstrates the repairs service is efficiently run and offers value for money when considered alongside high customer satisfaction. The cost of repairs management per property was returned at £34 which also demonstrates value for money, ranking in an overall 4<sup>th</sup> position. The contractor cost of delivering the repairs service throughout the year

was the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest at £254 per property. Satisfaction with the responsive repairs service was ranked the 5<sup>th</sup> highest.

- 3.10 On average it took the repairs service only 6 days to carry out all repairs across nearly 8000 repairs. This compares well, ranked in 6<sup>th</sup> position nationally. The worst 7 organisations ranged from taking 13 to 17 days to carry out their repairs.
- 3.11 The management cost involved in re-letting empty properties was only £12 per property and the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest overall cost.
- 3.12 Costs of cyclical maintenance also fare well. On average Housing Services spends £1087 per property which is the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest. Management costs of providing the improvements service are again low and ranked the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest, whilst the contractor cost of major repairs is the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest at £591 per property.
- 3.13 The direct cost of providing overall housing management per property at £110 is the lowest of all local authority peers.
- 3.14 Overall satisfaction with the home, taken from the 2008 STATUS survey, is ranked the 5<sup>th</sup> highest at 88%.
- 3.15 In 2009/10 the average time taken to re-let empty properties was 22 days. This ranked the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest with the highest 2 landlords taking an average 70 and 90 days respectively to re-let their homes. Current 2010/11 performance is running at 15 days.
- 3.16 The cost of rent collection activities per property was returned at £46 and ranked the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest cost, whilst the actual percentage of rent arrears was ranked the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest amongst the peer group.

#### **4. Investors In Excellence**

- 4.1 Throughout 2010 the Council's Housing Service has been working toward accreditation to the Investors in Excellence standard. This is a measure that the best private and public sector organisations use to ensure that their services provide quality, value for money, are strategically focussed and well led and are also responsive to customer needs.
- 4.2 Following a desktop review an on-site external inspection was carried out on the Housing Service in mid-December. It is pleasing to report that we have recently been informed that the Housing Service has been assessed as meeting the accreditation standard and the award is due to be collected today (3<sup>rd</sup> February) at a ceremony in Birmingham.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The benchmarking exercise indicates that the Council's Housing Services are both low cost and value for money.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Provision of excellent housing services is in line with the Corporate Plan and reflects well on the Council's reputation and standing.

## **7. Community Implications**

- 7.1 The provision of excellent Housing Service appears to be appreciated by tenants in that satisfaction ratings are some of the highest in the country.

## **8. Background Papers**

- 8.1 Due to its size the full Housemark Benchmarking Report is not appended but is available on request.