

# Housing and Community Services Performance Action Plans 2019/20 Quarter 2

## Appendix D

### There are five actions for Housing and Community Services

**Theme:** Outcomes

**Target vs performance:**

Q2 Target: 2.5%

Q2 Performance: 2.85%

**Trend (compared to last quarter/year):**

Q1 Performance: 2.47%

**Background:**

The increase in rent arrears is likely to be a result of the increased numbers of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) and now subject to either delays in payment or simply a change in their payment schedule.

Current UC claimants from Department of Work and Pensions Landlord Portal	254
Total UC Claimant Rent arrears as at 06.10.19	£126,785.71
Total rent arrears for same group of people at 18.11.18	£60,471.79
Total Increase in rent arrears for UC claimants since UC roll out	£ 66,313.92

A group of 136 tenants who went on to claim UC had a balance of £0.00 at 18.11.18, the total arrears for that same group of people is currently £39,129.19. Had those tenants continued to claim Housing Benefit after November 2018 it is likely that the level of increase would not have happened, barring a change in circumstances.

This is a trend that is echoed in all other areas where UC has been introduced so the Council is not unique in this. Anecdotal information from Trent and Dove Housing indicates that its arrears are also increasing.

**Key actions underway:**

- Review all rent arrears accounts to ensure that the correct level of enforcement action is being taken.



O1.2 Rent arrears of  
Current tenants as a %  
of rent due

**2.85%**

**Target <2.5%**

- Two members of the team, along with the Tenancy Sustainment Officer, will be focusing solely on income collection, arrears recovery and benefit queries/advice.
- Re-visit projects preparing tenants practically for UC with a programme of communications. This is designed to encourage current benefit claimant tenants to pay extra onto their rent to mitigate against the five weeks arrears which will occur when they move to UC.
- Finalise the arrears recovery procedure in the Orchard system to ensure that recovery is compliant, effective and is clear to Council tenants.
- Re-commence cold-calling to tenants who are in arrears.

#### Opportunities/risks:

- Opportunity to enhance services through completion of Orchard tasks.
- Opportunity to focus on tenants and provide support with their finances.
- Risks- that arrears continue to rise (at trend which is echoed by other providers in the region).



PE1.1 Average time taken to re-let local authority homes (days) (excluding major voids).

**103.44 days**

**Target <21 days**

**Theme:** People

#### Target vs performance:

Target: Less than 21 days  
Performance for Q2: 103.44 days

#### Trend (compared to last quarter):

Quarter 1 - 99.6 days was achieved

#### Background:

##### General

The average time taken to relet vacant properties has increased this quarter as the Council and its Repairs' Contractor NOVUS begin to work through the backlog of vacant properties which have been empty for some time.

##### Contractor performance

The major Repairs Contract which was due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 unfortunately was delayed, and did not start until July 2019, leaving the Council without a contractor to assist in completing void works. This has in

effect created a three-month backlog of void works. For the short-term NOVUS will complete work to all void properties with the aim of completing work to a higher standard and in a shorter timescale. NOVUS has provided a schedule of properties which includes proposed timescales for completion.

#### Process and procedures

A full review of existing process and procedures revealed that they needed to be improved. A new process is now in place.

#### **Key actions underway:**

- A new Contractor is in place
- A higher standard of work in vacant properties is being undertaken.
- A new specialist cleaning contractor to clean empty properties has been appointed.
- A new 'end-to-end' process has been implemented.
- Properties in low demand are being identified earlier and alternative advertising and letting strategies are being deployed.
- A review of the current Allocations Policy is underway to encourage higher demand for sheltered properties.
- New Asbestos survey and removal contracts are now place.

#### **Opportunities/risks:**

The key actions provide an opportunity to let properties promptly at a higher standard, improving the Council's rental income and customer and tenant satisfaction.

The major risk for the Council is of continued lower demand for sheltered accommodation which is a significant proportion of the housing stock. Possible refurbishment and modernisation of sheltered dwellings will be considered as part of the overall major improvement plan.

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#### **Theme: People**

#### **Target vs performance:**

Q2 Target - > 21days  
Q2 Performance – 58.2 days

#### **Trend (compared to last quarter):**

59.8 days at the end of Quarter one



PE1.2 Average length  
of time for current  
voids

**58.2 days**

**Target <21 days**

### Background:

The Council and its Repairs' Contractor NOVUS are beginning to make progress through the backlog of outstanding void properties so the average time that properties are empty will begin to reduce.

### Key actions underway:

- A new contractor to carry out major void works has been appointed.
- A higher standard of work in vacant properties is being undertaken.
- A new specialist cleaning contractor to clean empty properties has been appointed.
- A new 'end-to-end' process has been implemented.
- Properties in low demand are being identified earlier and alternative advertising and letting strategies are being deployed.
- The current Allocations Policy is being reviewed to encourage higher demand for sheltered properties.

### Opportunities/risks:

The key actions provide an opportunity to let properties promptly at a higher standard, improving the Council's rental income and also customer and tenant satisfaction.

The major risk for the Council is of continued lower demand for sheltered accommodation which is a significant proportion of the housing stock. Possible refurbishment and modernisation of sheltered dwellings will be considered as part of the overall major improvement plan.

### The Better Care Fund



PE1.3. Delivery of Better Care Fund (BCF) schemes in accordance with assurance plans.  
NEW.

**Not Achieved**

### Theme: People

### Target vs performance:

Q2 Target: Submit plans for 2019/20 BCF spend following allocation and gain associated Committee approvals for projects.

This was delayed as the policy revisions needed to be in place to enable the new schemes to be approved. The 'Private Sector Housing Renewals Policy' has now been re-written and will be appended to the November Committee report for formal adoption.

### Trend (compared to last quarter):

The Better Care Fund carries a significant underspend and co-ordination of the planned spend is now managed via an internal group that prioritises the schemes to be developed for committee approval whilst monitoring

progress of current projects alongside the ongoing mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) spend.

**Background:**

The other previously approved schemes funded by the BCF are making a significant impact on residents across the District. The Mental Health Service has prevented hospital admissions at crisis point and the Health Homes Programme has funded a range of improvements and facilities that will improve health / quality of life for occupants living in the private sector.

**Key actions underway:**

The BCF report setting out the Council's current position approved by Housing and Community Services Committee on 3.10.19 and a further report will be taken to the same Committee on 21.11.19 outlining the new proposed schemes to address the underspend. The Council will also be represented at the BCF Board meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November to give an update on the DFG spend to date and progress against the previously approved schemes

A revised 'Housing Renewals and Assistance Policy' is being compiled by Strategic Housing to enable the Council to develop and fund new schemes outside the remit of the DFG that will be funded by the BCF. This new policy will be appended to the November Committee report for adoption.

**Opportunities/risks:**

- There is an opportunity for the Council to work collectively to identify / deliver new schemes that will specifically align with the principles of the BCF
- The internal group was established to mitigate against future risks associated with underspend and lack of co-ordination
- There would be a risk for the Council if the BCF was used to fund projects outside the remit of this funding allocation
- There would also be a risk if the Council failed to submit timely assurance plans to the County Council for ratification at quarterly BCF Board



PL1.9 Capital  
programme for the

**Theme:** Place

**Target vs performance:**

Q2 Target - Presentation of delivery plan for approval.

Q2 Performance not achieved

delivery of enhancements to public open spaces utilising Section 106 contributions.

**Not Achieved**

Measure not met – A Play Improvement Plan was presented to Scrutiny Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> October. However, the ability to put an accurate time table to a full capital programme is dependent on availability of human resources which will be addressed in a Cultural & Community Services restructure report due to be reported Committees in January 2020..

**Trend (compared to last quarter/year):**

*N/A – New measure*

**Background:**

Cultural Services has had reduced staffing levels within the Open Spaces team for two years.

**Key actions underway:**

Cultural & Community Services restructure report being drafted to ensure that there are adequate resources to deliver the capital programme. Implementation of some S106 funded projects underway. Small project team reconvening to progress delivery plan.

**Opportunities/risks:**

Subject to approval a restructured Cultural and Community Services team will have capacity to realise and implement a delivery plan.